SOUTHEAST ALASKA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME III

Nolan Center
Wrangell, Alaska
March 21, 2019
9:00 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Donald Hernandez, Chair
Larry Bemis
Michael Douville
Albert Howard
Harvey Kitka
Cathy Needham
Robert Schroeder
Elijah Winrod
Frank Wright
John Yeager

Regional Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry

Recorded and transcribed by:

Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
135 Christensen Drive, Suite 2
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-227-5312/sahile@gci.net
PROCEEDINGS
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(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I'll call the meeting to order. Welcome everyone. This is the third day of the Southeast Regional Advisory Committee meeting. Is there anyone on the phone who would like to introduce ourselves.

MS. BECKER: Brenda Becker, Glennallen Field Office.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Ms. Becker.

Anyone else.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Kevin Hall would like to speak for public, tribal testimony.

DR. HALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Council. I appreciate the opportunity. My name is Dr. Kevin Hall. I'm a physician treating and serving the Indian community in Ketchikan, Alaska. I'm here to represent Camp 14 of ANB/ANS. Just so that I understand, my written remarks would carry about eight minutes. Is there a time limit I should truncate them for?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you for asking, Mr. Hall. We do not limit testimony, however we do try to assure that you understand that we try to keep things moving as we have a lot of agenda items, but we don't have a limit.

Thank you.

DR. HALL: Thank you. I'll try to be succinct. We, the Alaska Native Brother/Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp 14 strongly object to the Federal Subsistence Board's fisheries responsibility being transferred to the State of Alaska and the Alaska Fish and Game. The inherent right of the tribe to take and process subsistence fish, game and other subsistence
foods will be severely impacted by the lack of support that the State of Alaska has demonstrated for tribal rights and sovereignty in this matter.

It is inherent to the leadership of Camp 14 that the State of Alaska does not have any subsistence priority that would include tribal people recognition, the unique relationship that Alaska tribes have with the Federal government, a history of fighting for the unique rights of the tribes in Alaska to hunt, gather and fish for those foods that are traditional and are absolutely required for the preservation of our Native culture and our way of life. And, finally, have a policy that invests in underserved communities.

In my role as a physician, I have had the privilege to treat Native Americans and now currently serve Native Alaskans in Ketchikan. My patients too often tell me of wanting to avail themselves of traditional foods but they are prohibited. I look at a poster of the Tlingit seasonal diet and think how it aligns with the current recommendations from my patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes and amazed how well it would serve them.

I listen to the elders and those who battle with alcohol and drugs and their battle leaves them literally ungrounded. Subsistence is a meaningful way of life. It has been rendered moot for many of my patients. The damage done by this is felt heavily within the community and people who have modest means are deprived of a more healthful diet.

Incidently, this pattern has been documented by ethnoanthropologists in California as well. When a substance has been eroded, the first two foods that were bartered for were flour and sugar. Those are not anything that we recommend to people with chronic diseases.

I think of this when I counsel my diabetic patients. I also recall my days with the Pima Indians of Arizona whose glucose receptors responded better to a Native flora than to Western-made medicines. The ecosystem of a Native Alaska life with this land is very real and felt very deeply. I experience it daily with my patients.
Alaska Native people are taught at a very young age that they are not to waste subsistence resources, especially fish and wildlife. They are to take only what is needed and when it is needed. They treat all living things with respect and they do not damage the land without cause. Most significantly they are taught the importance of family and community and the need to share their harvest and resources with those in the community or village who are also in need. Estimates show that one member practicing subsistence actually feeds or nurtures two or three more.

Alaska Native cultures have seen great changes in the last century including the imposition of Western laws and governments, Radical changes in the economy and resource development, significant technological advances, global environmental change and devastating loss in the populations to Western disease.

2018 actually marks the third straight year when for the whole world life expectancy has fallen. This has not happened since a century has passed when we had the Spanish Flu epidemic and we were concerned that this represents a broader picture and we must protect against it.

The State of Alaska's assertion in ANILCA that all citizens in the state of Alaska should be treated the same is the primary reason for the Camp's objection. The assertion strips subsistence of its meaning and renders it into line item resource management, ignoring the millennium-long culture that it represents.

This example of Alaska's policy to assimilate tribal people is both abhorrent and disturbing to tribal people representing by the Camp who have harvested, processed, consumed and managed their traditional foods longer than before European countries have existed let alone these United States.

The stance of the Camp is we require our aboriginal and indigenous rights to take and process our food without the mantel of the State of Alaska's policies, policies that ignore tribal rights and the cultural history.

The ANB/ANS Camp 14 objects to any action by the Federal Fisheries Board to turn over
substance regulation to the State of Alaska. We object on the basis of the State's historically not recognizing the unique relationship of the Alaska Native tribes or their people.

We also object to the Federal fisheries, hunting and gathering rights being abrogated by entities with their duties and responsibilities to the Native tribes to a state that does not recognize those unique tribal entities and the relationship that the tribes enjoy with the Federal government.

We also advocate for the Federal subsistence grants available in the state be awarded to tribes for the sole purpose of working with the Federal government to better regulate subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering rules and regulations rather than continue the legal war of subsistence. Tribes, the Federal government and the State need to open meaningful dialogue with Federal, State and tribal regulatory environments that protect subsistence rights for everyone in Alaska.

Tribes will be able to self-regulate their fishery, hunting and gathering rights and that State will continue to have some input and negotiates in good faith with the tribes to ensure the sustainability of all subsistence activities. However, this agreement, the optimum language, will be the State recognition of the tribes' rights to continue to have special and unique subsistence rights that will be protected and guaranteed by the State of Alaska.

Finally, Camp 14 members would invite the Federal Subsistence Board to meet in Ketchikan before any decision is made.

Thank you for your time.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great. Thank you, Mr. Hall. If you can stay, I want to open up the opportunity for whether or not any Council members would like to ask questions or have a discussion.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you for coming to talk to us. We really appreciate that. This is the second time I've heard
talk of the State taking over subsistence. I thought
at first it was just a rumor, but I don't know how
seriously the State is looking at this.

Could you expound on that a little
more.

DR. HALL: I'll be happy to share what
understanding I have, but I have members in my Camp
that are much more qualified. But as I understand
there is a move afoot for the State to take over for
the Federal government the subsistence rights. This is
one of the -- we have a member in the Camp, Frank
James, who has just prevailed -- actually over six
years ago prevailed on a legal suit, Peratrovich, et
al, and is trying to negotiate with the Federal
Subsistence Board.

It's through that that he has come to
the knowledge that they're trying to change some of
this. Frankly, this is unwanted and, in the opinion of
the Camp, unneeded for subsistence to be regulated in
the State.

I'm sorry that I'm not more of an
expert.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there any
more questions or comments from the Advisory Council
for Mr. Hall.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.
Thank you for coming and giving testimony. It's very
important to the work that we do that we have
individuals such as yourself bringing issues and
concerns to us and putting it on the public record. So
I appreciate the time that you took to do that this
morning.

I'd like to remind -- I meant to do
this before Mr. Hall came up, but if the members of the
audience that would like to testify this morning there
are blue cards located at the table at the entranceway
and you can sign up and fill out the card and have it
brought up here and delivered to Ms. Perry at the end
of the table here and we'll make sure that we call you
up as we go through the different public testimony.
I'm going to take a couple more public testimonies that we have blue cards for here and I also want to let members who might be calling in on the telephone that I will check in with you to see if there's anybody on the phone that would like to give public testimony this morning as well. So we will make that accommodation.

Next I'd like to invite Ms. Trixie Bennett up from Ketchikan Indian Community who would like to talk about general comments on behalf of the KIC tribe.

MS. BENNETT: Let me get logged in here. Good morning. Good morning, Mr. Chair and Council members. Thank you for the opportunity to comment this morning. My name is Trixie Kalkins Bennett. I'm an elected tribal councilwoman from Ketchikan Indian Community, a Federally recognized tribe in Alaska.

I'm a lifelong Alaskan. I grew up in Wrangell. We lived very much a subsistence lifestyle. We commercial fished, we did shrimp with a beam trawl, we did pot fishing for shrimp and dungeness, we power trawled, we longlined. More recently as an adult I've seined and pot shrimped and I've fished the herring roe on kelp fishery, which is my favorite.

Being indigenous we also counted on customary and traditional foods and our way of life to sustain us physically and spiritually as I was growing up. Ever since I can remember we've been watching most of these resources being depleted here in Wrangell and Ketchikan area where I've been for over 20 years now and working with the tribe.

The size of king salmon have gone lower and lower. We saw the derby winners in the '60s starts out with 74-pounders and on into the '90s and 2000s they're 40-pounders, 30-pounders. Now there's no king salmon derby. I've watched this happen in most of the other fisheries including the herring.

In the words of -- I think it was Councilman Howard, it's all being taken away from us. Even though the science says differently at times and no matter what we say or do so far, testimony is not good enough to match the science that supports many of
these openings and the closures.

As my parents aged we couldn't commercial fish anymore. We found other ways to get to the fish. We'd drive from harbor to harbor and to the creeks and the lakes, both on Revillagigedo and Wrangell here. We just wanted to see the fish spawn and see how they're doing. Due to growth and building roads a lot of fish and wildlife habitat has been diminished. I know you know these things.

At Wrangell Dad pointed out where logging killed lands and where roads blocked off entire streams and he was disappointed in it all. All in the name of progress he would say. In Ketchikan he told me how the Tongass Narrows used to be plugged with herring every spring. The whole Ward Cove area. The herring are all gone there now except for a sporadic little spawn here and there, which gets us a little excited, but not much to speak of.

Over at Craig, Klawock and in Ketchikan I fished the herring roe on kelp and salmon seine fisheries. During the past several years the herring return and spawn in the creek area where we fished has been mostly consistent. A couple years ago they were a little bit unpredictable and for the first time came to areas that people hadn't seen a spawn in ages. If that's a good sign or a bad sign nobody really knows. That's debatable from what I've read.

Overall, from my perspective, the roe on kelp fishery has been pretty healthy over the past few years. In the last couple years we begin lining each row of our pens with hemlock branches. Not only do the branches help protect the kelp product from sticking to the side of the ponds, but it's providing an excellent product to give away to the community and family members.

The branches in the pond of the spawning herring grow thick with eggs, as thick as they do on the kelp, so it's pretty exciting for people to get that. The past two years we were able to give away several totes loaded with herring on branches and some of the kelp. This year the Ketchikan Indian Community will help us get the herring eggs over to Ketchikan to share with the tribe there. We're planning to hold an event to celebrate the return of the herring and to eat
them eggs.

In most of the years I've been out there the spawn was good enough that locals were able to harvest it in the traditional and customary ways that they're used to. Go out in the skiffs and get it themselves. So that's been good to see.

Having said that we continue to watch our brothers and sisters in Sitka lose their fight to protect what is left of their herring fishery. Last year we were told that they were too small and didn't spawn in a manner that provided the herring eggs that is traditional and customary to the Sheet'ka Kwaan. We share with the people we know in Sitka, but we know a lot of people up there went without.

The Sitka Tribe has lost their case in court because they cannot prove irreparable harm will occur as a result of bait and the roe fisheries. Those fisheries take the biggest and the best herring for their type of fishery and wasting them by taking -- or in our opinion -- even though we all know the king salmon is starving we continue to take their food.

I hope that local tribes can set up more ways to co-manage the herring populations beginning with an improved system of monitoring that will satisfy all the stakeholders.

We're with Mr. Leighton from Kasaan. We just find it incredulous that elder testimony and observation doesn't carry weight as the State biologist observes flying over with a plane. They use that to make their decisions, but can't take in historical recollections and elder testimony. I hope we can find a way to bridge that.

Other concerns. There's overpopulation of predators occurring in our areas. We've seen an exponential increase in sea lions around Ketchikan, definitely out by Craig. Just yesterday I was talking to a friend and a couple hundred sea lions running through. Hopefully that's a good sign for the herring, but it's a lot more than we're used to seeing. Definitely in Ketchikan we're seeing a lot more in the summer.

We also have seen firsthand about the
sea otter overpopulation. In areas outside of Craig they're eating everything on the bottom. I learned at a presentation by Dennis Nickerson that the sea otters actually eat 25 percent of their body weight each day just to survive. That's a lot of clams. They're having a big impact, so we're concerned about that too.

In Ketchikan we have to go further and further for our halibut and the salmon are not returning in the numbers we need even for subsistence. Almost everyone I know had to go buy their sockeye from the cannery. Finally just gave up at the end of the summer. A few went to Prince of Wales to get in on that late run of cohos, so that was good, that hatchery coho. But most people ran out of fish several months ago that are used to having it all year long.

Even the bears seem to stay thin all summer in our area. They didn't go to bed until January, February and they seemed to still be hungry. I heard reports yesterday that they're already up again moving around. Of course they're in the trash cans looking for food. The skunk cabbage isn't even up yet, which is like 75 percent of their diet this time of year. So scary times.

I thought it was also important to mention since I think it was you, Mr. Chair, that brought it up. A lot of families I know, including my kids, skipped their annual hunting trip to Prince of Wales because of the lower limits for deer. It just isn't cost efficient anymore.

Other concerns that echo what I've heard this week are surrounding climate change, of course, around water shortages and all the problems that go without water. Problems for humans and fish and wildlife.

In Ketchikan we're running on diesel. Swan Lake is low. We got about 23 percent less rain than we usually get, which doesn't seem like a bad deal when you get 13 feet a year, but it's had huge impact especially when all the drought came at once, you know, June, July, August, prime spawning times.

Also I think it was Mr. Schroeder who spoke of the Southeast symptom, the cruise ships. 1.3 million passengers are coming this year and that's not
including crew. There's two crew for every passenger, so we're talking millions of people coming through here and they've got to do something with that waste. They're releasing it in Alaska waters.

In Ketchikan they release it right at the dock, the greywater. It's probably chlorine-base product getting that from wastewater to greywater. I don't know. It just can't be good because it's literally millions of gallons of greywater right at the mouth of Ketchikan Creek. One ship one day. Multiply that times -- I think there's like six or eight that are actually allowed to dump there, mostly Princess ships.

The last thing I promise to comment during this time is surrounding Ketchikan's rural designation. The status of our tribe is an area that has grown from -- or the area that our tribe is in has grown from rural to urban, of course. Subsistence management regulations in Alaska list the Ketchikan area as being a non-rural community.

KIC headquarters and KIC members do have a common bond of residents in the geographic boundaries of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. However, the rural determination process fails to distinguish KIC as a separate Indian community or Indian tribal government with a distinct population of Alaska Natives residing in its territory.

So the population size of the Ketchikan area includes KIC tribal members and non-tribal members, so our 6,000 members don't have rural designation. So that's an area the tribe would like to address with the Board.

After you each gave your comments on the first day I felt a bit of gloom and doom, so I don't want to end my comments like that. I want to end with telling you that I leave here really encouraged. It's my first meeting with the board. I think that this Council and the staff are the best set of eyes and ears we can have out there for all Southeast subsistence users.

I'm encouraged by the work that's already being done and by the work that is being planned. I'm encouraged by your concern and your
dedication I’ve heard coming from this Council towards
your work and the people and the communities that you
represent. Thank you for this work to preserve the
customary and traditional food for us. Gunalcheesh.

I’m especially encouraged to hear about
the work and funding going towards co-management
efforts with tribes and communities. Not only is this
a good way to extend the good work being done, but
having more involvement by tribes and communities may
begin to help bridge the decision-making process and
begin to address the overarching concern and the demand
I’m hearing from subsistence users that our needs need
to be met before commercial and other interests. I
think it will help that.

Lastly, on behalf of KIC Tribe, we also
wanted to thank Forest Supervisor Earl Stewart and his
staff. We cannot tell you how much we appreciate their
work on the Unuk River to monitor the eulachon. This
effort has helped the tribe in getting experience,
confidence and knowledge to move forward towards more
co-management activities for the tribe. In fact, Don,
KIC is actively pursuing ways to further those efforts
now.

Gunalcheesh, Earl, to you and all your
staff, especially Emily and Jeff. I guess that’s about
it. On behalf of KIC I want to thank you all for
listening to my tribal comments supporting the mission
of Ketchikan Indian Community.

Gunalcheesh.

Haw’aa.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Are there any questions or comments for
Ms. Bennett.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you for coming
before us. You mentioned one thing that we haven’t
talked about here and we did for years and years. We
finally became exhausted. It’s the one of the sea
otter. I would suggest that the tribes in Southeast
all get their heads together and make a concerted
effort to make the change as a whole body. That might be helpful.

You know, I live right where they are. Some of the clam beds we've used for years are just tiny, as big as this little circle, and they go away. It's really bad.

But clean water is -- you know, we've been focusing on water in the creeks and streams, but we also need clean seawater. It's as important as anything else. I know Ketchikan has this problem. It was publicized last year. You could actually see it in pictures. It was horrible.

Does the tribe ever approach the city or the borough and brought this to their attention? Because I would think while it drives their economy they could certainly be more responsible and have it cleaned up. I mean inside waters we have here used to be pristine and it's really distressing to see this happening and getting worse.

MS. BENNETT: Yeah, with the sea otter we're getting ready to join the -- I think it's -- I can't remember the -- it's a sea otter coalition. It started with Prince of Wales, but now I think it includes Wrangell maybe. They're going to add us. I can't remember the status update. Maybe Tony could answer to that.

So we are having some involvement with that and some collaboration in doing some outreach and education. I can't remember where their next stop is, but they had a pretty good little plan going forward this year. Dennis Nickerson and that outfit over there through their tribal conservation district maybe. Anyway, there was some work being done.

Yes, the tribe has approached -- I don't know if we've approached the city, but we found out that the permits are given by the State to release the wastewater within Alaska waters. Then the other permit I think it also came through the State where they're allowed to release all that greywater right in port, which I think those permits are up in 2020. So that's something we're looking at as well. We're getting a little help from SEACC with that too.
Yeah, we have no coastline to harvest traditional foods from. We don't pick our beach asparagus anywhere near there. All our beaches are too high in fecal matter and we're not sure if that's coming from local places because there's quite a few places that their sewer goes right into the ocean still. They're working on some of that and ANTHC has done some good work with Saxman to get that area all up to code or in compliance, but there's still dozens and dozens of homes that go right into the ocean. It's pretty gross.

Any other questions.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Mr. Kitka, then Mr. Hernandez.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Thank you for coming to talk to us. We really appreciate hearing from the tribes. It's really great. Probably one of the first times that I know of that Sitka has got eggs from someplace else other than Sitka Sound.

The reason was the commercial industry fishing boats kind of trapped the herring on the sandy bottom on the Kruzof shore and wouldn't let them continue their migration pattern. That was part of it. I really appreciate hearing you talk on that.

Some of these communities are having trouble with sea otter should get in contact with Sitka on how they're doing with sea otter there because they're finally getting to a point where we can start getting some of our food from the sea again like the urchins and the abalone and some of the places where the gumboots were, our cockle beds and things. Just unbelievable what they had done to it.

Thank you again.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms. Bennett.

I also want to thank you for taking the time to come and report to us from Ketchikan. It's very helpful.

You mentioned one thing in your report
there that I thought might be -- it struck me as
something that might be of particular interest to the
Council and that was the rural determination process
and how that affects Ketchikan. Title VIII of ANILCA
is a Federal law and, you know, it's legislation and
legislation is the art of compromise.

When Title VIII was enacted I think
there was the grand compromise made in terms of the
Native people and that was to make it a rural priority
as opposed to a Native priority. That's just kind of
the way the law is. However, all laws have to be
implemented and there's a mechanism that we go through
to implement the law and that's the rural determination
process.

What you brought forward there was
something I never heard before about how viewing a
Native community as a community unto itself with
occupying a territory and a piece of land. I would
encourage you to pursue that. At some point in the
whole rural determination process the Councils do get
to weigh in on that process and I think it would be a
really interesting thing for this Council to get a
chance to look at that topic and give an opinion on it.
So I encourage you to pursue that.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there other
comments for Ms. Bennett.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, thank you so much
for your testimony. I've got a couple of things. One
is that the Council recently submitted a letter to the
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
concerning cruise ship pollution. That just got
through our process on March 5, so it may not have
gotten to you. Probably your interests and ours really
align on that. I believe there are copies on the table
over there.

We do need a lot of push on Department
of Environmental Conservation to get some changes here.
Some parts of it are really clear, namely no one wants
poop on their food. This is pretty clear. However,
the permitting thing is kind of wonky, so to comment
effectively we all need help to get in there to know what standards are appropriate and how to address the ludicrous notion of a mixing zone.

I mean I've never understood a mixing zone in that, you know, something is really bad for you, how can it be good for you if you mix it up with some more water. This doesn't make a great deal of sense to me.

Second, on the co-management, I believe this Council would probably support co-management if we had a possibility of weighing in on that. The Council has been very supportive of cooperative projects through the Fisheries Program. Basically what we found is that these projects really work well and they work better than if simply we had Forest Service or Fish and Wildlife Service undertake field projects. I'm talking strictly about the results of the project.

Additionally, they create wonderful opportunities for people to train up and understand how some of this stuff works. So I'd really hope that there would be more of a move to co-management both because of efficiency, but also because it's the right thing to do. I mean why shouldn't people who have traditional ownership of the land and resources be the ones to manage those resources.

The last thing is I really appreciate your detailed report, but part of what the Council is charged to do is to really see if subsistence needs are being met. So while our actions are typically on specific species and specific areas, there's also the overall notion of our subsistence needs being met and I'm wondering if you could put something on the record specifically to that.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder.

Ms. Bennett.

MS. BENNETT: On the record like right now? Like I said in my testimony, we haven't undertaken a complete community needs assessment, but that's in the works and that's something we want to ask
our people is actually how many people are subsistence
users. You know, get some baseline data. We might
have some old stuff somewhere. They haven't even been
doing like the halibut shark surveys in our area, but
those are going to be done this year I understand, at
least for tribal members.

But like I said most of the community
members didn't get enough salmon. They definitely
didn't get their sockeye. They went down to Phillips
because they had the best price and got their sockeye
that way. The hatchery out there we count on that
quite a bit, Herring Cove, because it's on the road
system and our tribal members can get to it. They
didn't have much to give away at all. They didn't get
their quota of fish. We usually count on that, so we
didn't get that.

The fish didn't come back there to
District 1. All the seiners went up, you know, Sitka,
and the hatchery returns ended up being a little better
up that way in Juneau. That late run of cohos saved a
few people, but definitely not enough fish for the
record. Not enough fish. So we're doing what we can.
Halibut, like I said, we don't know, but I'll be happy
to come back to this board again and put it on the
record when I know more.

MR. SCHROEDER: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great. Thank
you, Ms. Bennett. We'd appreciate that.

Mr. Wright, you had a question or
comment.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I feel what you're talking about ships. I'm in a
position where I end up speaking against our
corporation. This is the second time I've spoke up
against. First it was because of logging. Now my
corporation is going to be building a new dock, another
dock, in our little town of Hoonah, which is only --
what, 700 people live there.

One ship comes in, that's more people
than living in our town. They're expecting 270,000
people to visit the community of Hoonah. If they're
going to be putting another dock in there, can you
imagine that. It's going to look like Juneau, people walking around.

I mean, you know, the city even had proposed to build out from Front Street 65 feet out and put a landfill there and I went to city council and I said, hey, that's not what they want to see. But I know there's going to be some added pollution within our area, so I speak on behalf of our tribe because I'm the tribal president.

I always say what is the impact going to have on our people. The emphasis is not our Tlingit culture, the emphasis is on money. Like I said, I spoke up against logging in Hoonah before and now I'm kind of PO'd because the corporation didn't even come to the tribe and say what do you think. They just said we're going to do this. So Gunalcheesh for speaking up on that pollution.

Another thing is the sea otters. If Ketchikan is going to be putting some program together, I think you could try to contact Hoonah Indian Association and maybe we could work together because we're having a problem too. We try to cut off Port Frederick, so we get hunters to go up there to clean the sea otters out of there just so we can keep the dungies and the cockles and clams up there because it's just scary. You think of Cordova used to be a big dungie industry. Now there's nothing there because of man interfering with Mother Nature.

Sea lions same thing. They say they're endangered. Who said that? I don't know because they're not. I mean we've got little baby sea otters swimming around our area all the time. I was talking to one of my councilmen. He says, yeah, I had about a 40-pounder and all of a sudden -- he was just going to club it and all of a sudden there was a sea lion just come up underneath his skiff and took it. Whenever I see a sea lion and I throw a hook overboard, I don't even stay there. I just move on. So it's a waste of time. The sea lion was actually following me, waiting for me to catch a fish. They're not endangered. Whoever says that is hooey.

I think you coming up and speaking it puts a lot of credibility on your tribe to be doing that. I wish more people would be coming forward as
you're coming forward, especially tribal members from each community or tribal presidents or anybody that has the authority to do that. It makes things a lot more powerful.

Gunalcheesh for being here.

Gunalcheesh.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Wright.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. Concerning the wastewater from the cruise ship industry, they advertise Alaska as pristine and they do that to our waters.

That's my only comment on that.

Co-management. Prince of Wales has demonstrated a good example of co-management with Mr. Scott concerning wolves. My concern is now I don't see Mr. Scott around. Hopefully he got promoted.

Herring. What do you contribute the fact that they're making a comeback? What do you contribute that to? I mean I'm kind of wondering -- we're careful around Angoon. When a resource starts making a comeback, we don't post it on Facebook or we don't tell anybody because it becomes commercialized again.

What are your thoughts the reason that's making a comeback?

MS. BENNETT: Well, I don't know if it's making a comeback. All I can judge is from our participation in the fishery that we've done all right and the other guys have done all right as far as loading up pens and there being enough herring to put in them and they do their thing and we release them and we have a decent product.

The reports from Scott Walker, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, showed bigger spawn. I'm not sure if it was last year or the year before. I couldn't say here on the record that the fishery is
better or worse. Just from our own perspective that it's been consistent for us fishing out there.

Thank you.

MR. HOWARD: Just a comment, if I may, Madame Chair. Something for us to think about. You have Natives living in Ketchikan and they choose to go out of their way to get sockeye and cohos when you have so many options of different food groups within Ketchikan itself. It's part of who we are.

I spent seven months in Desert Storm. The thing I missed the most was our food. More than anything I missed our food. I was fortunate my parents sent me a care package with all the food that wouldn't spoil when it took a month to get to me. I'd have to say that was the best day of sitting out in the desert for seven months, was getting that food. I mean there was guys there that understood what it was and wanted some of it, but I refused to share it because that's all they were able to send me.

We have to keep in mind that Ketchikan Natives -- the things they do to get what they're used to having. There's opportunities for a lot of different food groups within that community but they choose to have what they've always had.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair. I just have a comment. I want to thank you for coming up and testifying in front of us. During your testimony you said briefly that we've probably heard this or we've probably seen this before and I just want to reiterate the importance of public testimony because there's a very good chance we haven't heard it.

More importantly is the fact that you're coming here and giving a local knowledge and a condition and a situation that makes our job more important. I think it's something that we as a Council really need to take into consideration that we won't
get this information unless people such as you come forward with it and it's a very important part of how we address, how we approach issues and how we can best help fix that and make the system better if we can at all.

So I really thank you for that. I hope if you come before us again you won't ever feel that we already know because we need to hear as much information as possible. We can't have a better source than you. So I really appreciate you coming up and taking the time to do that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Yeager.

Are there any other comments or questions from the Council for Ms. Bennett?

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'd like to thank you for coming in. I'm from Yakutat and I'm a new Council member for the RAC. As I'm here for the last couple days, I get to hear a lot of testimony from other communities. Some of these are impactable right in my home front.

And you bring up about the wastewater on the tour ships. Well, Yakutat has one of the largest traveling ships that used to go into Glacier Bay and come into Yakutat now. So I can't even tell you how many come in and go to the glacier every week of every month that they're allowable. Air quality, water quality.

Now you talk about these permits the State gave away. If you're on a regular fishing boat or a charter boat and you get your Coast Guard inspection, the first thing they go over do you carry any wastewater and how do you disperse it. There's new laws coming in where you're not even going to be able to pour your bilge water in the water. So I don't see how the State lets a permit go when the Federal government is trying to stop it.

So, you know, as you bring this to my attention and your situation where you're right downtown, I just find it appalling that something like
this can be allowed. I'm thinking that all the
communities should get together instead of just one
being segregated out worse than the others. That
possibly we all need to get together and share this
information either through our AC committees or tribal
committees and get an awareness going so that maybe
when the next 2020 permits come available that there
might be some restrictions to start curtailing it.

I know that the tourism business is so
big, plus the impact in Hoonah, plus all these places
that you don't change anything overnight. But an
awareness and lobbying and getting the right people to
listen and I feel right now with this Council that
reaches out to all the different communities we can all
go home having something to say about what we heard and
what the problems are and try to face up how to fix it.

I really want to thank you for your
testimony on all behalves because I live in a rural
community where fishing and hunting and subsistence is
our true way of life and we don't have anywhere else to
go to try to find it. So if it's there, we use it. If
it's not, we don't.

So I'm totally understandable about
your situation.

Madame Chair, I thank you for being
able to do this.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Are
there any other Council members that would like to
offer questions or comments at this time.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Ms. Bennett, I
really appreciate the time that you gave. I also want
to mention that as a tribal enrolled member of
Ketchikan Indian Community, I really feel like the
tribe has been represented well here today as you may
have noticed from the discussion that we had. I
appreciate the resources that KIC has put forward to
have yourself and your staff and your tribal councils
to come here and be present through all of our
proceedings.

So thank you again for your time today.
MS. BENNETT: You're welcome. It's been my pleasure.

Gunalcheesh.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Oh, Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: Ms. Bennett, I have just a few comments and some questions for you about the sea otters. Like I know some local Native artists that they have their little family businesses and they've made a big impact in their area in harvesting sea otters and selling their products to people.

What specifically through the Indian community are you doing to help encourage that type of thing, to harvest more sea otters and slow down the overpopulation?

MS. BENNETT: I know there's been some interest in -- like I said, I'm getting on board with the Southeast Sea Otter Commission that's formed over on Prince of Wales. We don't have a lot of sea otters right around Ketchikan yet, but we do at the other end of the island and when you get out on the other side of Gravina. I've heard some out there.

There's been talk in our economic development committee of supporting programs like you talk about, like Jeff Shakley's had or I think Jeremiah. James did up in Sitka. His name came up. But no concrete plans in that area. Just a lot of discussions so far on the sea otter. We want to help those over on Prince of Wales too in their efforts.

What was the other question?

MR. WINROD: I think just that, what you were doing to encourage it. Oh, another comment about the cruise ship industry. We all see the problem. I see how it's bad that they dump it by Ketchikan, but even if they dump it out in the deep water it's still in the same bathtub and that doesn't seem like a good solution either.

Do you have any ideas as to -- you know, you could just shut them down. That would be a way, but would there be any other ideas, like maybe make them have a holding pond or something like that.
where it could disintegrate without contaminating
everything. Do you have any thoughts on something like
that?

MS. BENNETT: I know some of the newer
ships are working towards better systems. I'm not real
familiar with them. But they're supposed to have
cleaner water when it comes out. The guy said he would
drink it.

The director of the cruise ship
industry of Alaska, I went and attended Southeast
Conference and, boy, everybody there was sure happy
about 1.3 million visitors except the tribal people
sitting in the middle. No, I think it's going to be a
fight and one that we have to be organized as you say
over there.

We're working together with -- SEACC is
helping us with a little bit of information. What we
really lack is data monitoring. They measure for fecal
matter, but they aren't measuring like for levels of
chlorine or whatever the hell they put in to get it to
greywater, you know what I mean, which is what they're
dumping right in port, right at the mouth of Ketchikan
Creek and they're allowed to do it.

When we go home I did see an email
about this and I did start reading that letter about
the cruise ship that you mentioned. I'm going to
finish reading that. But I think it's a good idea to
work with other tribes and community members to address
it because this will be our chance because that permit
that's allowing them to do it at the dock. Outside
waters I don't know.

That's something we'll have to talk
about.

MR. WINROD: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you again,
Ms. Bennett. I think we'll do one more before we take
a quick break. I'd like to invite Heather Bauscher
from Sitka Conservation Society. She's like to talk
about the Roadless and State cuts to habitat
assistance.

Good morning, Heather.
MS. BAUSCHER: Good morning. Thanks so much for having me up here. My name is Heather Bauscher and I am the Tongass Community Organizer for the Sitka Conservation Society. I'm also an adjunct professor of policy and procedures in this process and I'm a former field biotech in wildlife and fisheries. My partner is a commercial fisherman and I'm a subsistence user as well.

I have a few concerns I would like to express for the record. We've heard much about the relationship between the State and this dual management process and how it's working or not working from time to time. I know it's not in the board's power, but I was concerned to hear about the potential cuts to Division of Habitat and Subsistence in form of those director positions. I think that final vote might actually be happening today.

Not that any of us in this room will be able to do anything about that, but I think that's interesting and it concerns me because I think it will negatively impact the relationship between this board and the State and their ability to do this work. I think we should be investing in the resources to be able to collaborate and have the staff here. We've been talking a lot about that throughout this whole meeting.

I think collaboration is key on all of this.

In the theme of the State cuts, people are really concerned in all these communities and all of you already know that. Cost of living is really high. Loss of service. That's going to lead to more reliance on local resources and our subsistence salmon and deer are going to be our means for survival. Like I would not be able to afford to live in Sitka if I wasn't able to fill the freezer with fish and deer through the winter especially with the way the power rates are.

I know there's a lot of people in that boat.

Which kind of leads to some issues or concerns with the Roadless. I know timber is controversial. I grew up blue collar. I know we need
to have jobs and we need to manage for the ecosystem, but also for the people. I think there's ways to do it responsibly, but the possibility of fully exempting the Tongass specifically to open it up to timber is completely alarming and not responsible in my opinion.

I talk to a lot of people in my role across the region as community organizer and I know there's a lot of people that feel different ways on this, but I think the one thing that everybody agrees on is intact ecosystems for salmon. We've been talking for days about our concerns over salmon and I really hope that through this process that the T77 and the TNC watersheds, the ones that are most critical for salmon across the Tongass, will end up being protected in this process.

I'm only saying that for the record because I know this platform goes up the chain and I know that decisions will be made in the next couple weeks or months on what those alternatives will look like, but I do think it's important to people on all sides of this issue to protect the salmon watersheds.

I do appreciate that the Forest Service will be holding subsistence hearings on this once we get into the DEIS period. I was really happy to see that and I really appreciate the efforts to provide as many community meetings as possible. I think that's also really important because that way people feel like their voices are heard and they have an opportunity to weight in. Unfortunately, with the way the government shutdown happened I think that kind of undermined the ability of this group to weigh in in the way that they should have and I think that's unfortunate.

I find it alarming that the whole subsistence platform actually was silenced during that shutdown while certain other projects were able to move forward. But I do believe in collaboration in all of these issues and to allow these things to divide us only makes us weak and we need to continue to work together to find solutions. And that's what I really love about this process and that's why I participate in all these things.

I have tremendous faith in this process. I couldn't be a community organizer or an instructor on this if I didn't believe in it. I am
always impressed with the tremendous interagency collaboration that occurs here. I know that we're all here because we care about these places and this way of life and I hope that that can continue to bring us together.

To reference some words of Liz Medicine Crow that were spoken at the Natives Issues Forum in Juneau that when we feel like the sky is falling, we really have to link arms to hold it up. I appreciate everybody that's here in the room today because that's really what we're all trying to do here. So I hope that these things continue to bring us together and we can continue to collaborate to find solutions.

Thanks for letting me speak today.

Thank you.

Are there any questions or comments from the Council for Ms. Bauscher.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Just a question. How are your kids doing?

MS. BAUSCHER: The kids are doing well and they got thrown for a loop with the shutdown like all of us did, but I think almost all of them will be able to come to the meeting in April. So we'll have definitely five, hopefully six students here at the meeting in Anchorage. Two of them will have also attended the RAC at the last meeting that you met. Hopefully Blake and Jaylynn.

Thanks for asking.

They're really excited.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Wright.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I wanted to thank you for your testimony. I also want to thank you for having students and transferring that
energy to them. It's very important. I really think that somewhere along the way some of that energy has disappeared and it's nice to see it come back.

Thank you.

MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you, Harvey. I really appreciate that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there other questions or comments for Ms. Bauscher at this time.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Just a quick comment. Where I live there's a lot of concern over the Roadless also. Not only for fish streams but for habitat and things. We'll be getting into that a little bit later on.

MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you, Mike.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Any other comments or questions.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Heather, for coming and giving your testimony today and, again, for all of the work that you do. I know you gave kudos out to those of us in the room, but I think that goes kind of doubly back to you for engaging youth. As you know, it's something that's extremely important to this Council to be able to do and for the process.

Thanks again for that effort and your time today.

MS. BAUSCHER: Thanks so much to all of you. I really appreciate being here.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. I think that we could probably use a 10-minute break and meet back again at 10:20.

(Off record)
(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. We're ready to get started again. I'd like to ask whether or not Mr. Kevin Frank from Angoon is on the phone at this time and if he's ready to give tribal testimony.

MR. FRANK: This is Frank from Angoon.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are you there, Mr. Frank? We heard some try in, but it was a little broken up. Can you let us know if you're there again.

MR. FRANK: This is Kevin Frank.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great. Thank you very much. The microphone is yours.

MR. FRANK: Thank you, Madame Chair and Council. My name is Kevin Frank, Sr., council member of Angoon Community Association and I wanted to get on the record today and fill you in on things that the tribe has submitted support letters. One of the things that the tribe does have is the Traditional Food Council that we formed years ago and we put together our thoughts on the issues being discussed today.

One of the resolutions that the tribe submitted here through Albert Howard is Resolution 19-05. The tribe did offer the opportunity to speak on behalf of Angoon Community Association and also to submit a letter of support for the Sitka Tribe and everything that they're up against.

I know the issues that are being talked about. I was trying to think as to how I can approach because I'm not much on speaking. What I do know what I would like to say would be all about all our elders that have served in the past for their different communities and I know that in Angoon our elders always have.....

I want to briefly talk about myself. I had a son that was severely delayed and I know this is kind of aside from the main topic, but in growing up I had him for 16 years and I used to ask God why do I have a son that's a full-time son. After he passed away I did start seeing as to why God gave me this son.
What I learned is taking care of someone that's --
whether they be very delayed or elders you learn to
speak for your family, your community.

And our elders did a great job in this.
I started seeing a lot more as to how and why they did
what they did because our elders went to Washington, D.C. in support of our creation. They could pretty
much know, you know, that it's something that would
slow a lot of things down.

They weren't thinking about themselves.
They were thinking about the community of Angoon and
that Angoon has always took a stand like we're a
standing alone tribe is what they always told me in my
early years in the tribe. Now that we've come to where
we are it takes a lot of support from each other and I
know that we're going to start to see more unity and I
think that's going to be a great thing.

I didn't have much time to prepare
this, but I wanted to give some history and share a
little bit. I know that a lot of things that are going
on in Angoon today is there's -- last year our halibut
didn't come in and we were looking forward to the king
salmon season and then the State, you know, kind of
hold us down in that area. I know for myself I didn't
catch one king salmon last year.

I know that my family loves king
salmon. My dad is 84 and whenever I catch an 11-12
pounder, boy I'm excited. As soon as it gets in the
boat it's cleaned and off to the smokehouse. Because
my dad is going to be not here too much longer and I
really enjoy the things he works on for me along with
halibut.

Some of the things that come to mind
and I want to say is there was a story I was listening
to at one of the tribal meetings was -- it's a short
story and it kind of falls in line with my story and my
understanding. There was an elder standing on the
shoreline crying and nobody could figure out why he was
crying and people started asking questions and they --
the main thing that comes out of the story is that he
could see the future as to why things are going --
things that were going to be coming to Angoon.

And I appreciate everybody that's
standing up there because I'm sure you understand the feeling about your love for your family, your community and tribal members. It's something I didn't have when I was a young man. I was always kind of selfish until I had my son. When you have a son like the son I had you learn to speak for the people that can't speak for themselves. That's the way I put it. Not a correct terminology, but it's -- I can say that only because I lived that life.

But to get back to the things that Angoon lives off of and I mentioned with the king salmon closed caused a shortage. In Angoon the jobs and economics doesn't look very good right now for the economic part, but it's something we're really -- I don't want to say dependant. Something we enjoy and I would hope -- the stories of the communities are a big part of the -- it's a solution because it's......

I want to thank Albert for standing up and being who he is. I appreciate you guys listening to me. I know that as a kid I used to kind of chuckle when they -- I didn't really understand it because -- they used to say well then stand on the beach. I never knew what that meant when I was young but growing up you start catching on.

I wanted to call in just to get on the record in support for our resolutions and our letter of support and make sure that the Council knows that we did authorize Albert to speak on our behalf.

We'd hoped that the State of Alaska would start managing sooner rather than later because I know in Angoon when there's no sockeye -- you know, we don't have the education that the State of Alaska has, but we do know that sockeye is a pretty important resource and if there's no run, we don't fish. It's something that Angoon uses.

Every year there's usually interception or something that overfished. Angoon tries to protect ourselves and something that's been passed on by our elders as far as -- you know, we have monuments internally within the tribes.

Something that is pretty important to me, I heard somebody talking about kids before and I really really hope that one of the organizations would
stand behind education for the Natives of Alaska and transforming it to -- our learning experience will be a part of who you are rather than -- State standards should be part of it, but it shouldn't be -- because who you are is something that our elders stood for.

Again, I want to say thank you and thank you for your time and if Albert wants to add to anything I just spoke on I'd appreciate it. Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Frank. Are there Council members that have comments or questions that they'd like to ask of Mr. Frank at this time.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair. Thank you, Mr. Frank, for calling in. People at home understand the resource that's in our backyard and Mr. Kevin Frank, Sr. understands it more so than I do because if you talk to anybody in Angoon you ask them who spends more time on the water, is it Albert or Kevin, and it will always be Kevin, but I'll probably be a close third in the community.

He has a lot of traditional knowledge of the resource. Keep in mind that when he's testifying he's speaking for, what we say at home, is the next generation. Also keep in mind that Angoon has survived a bombardment in the 1800s and we attribute that to our elders at the time because they sacrificed. No, I'm not hungry, give it to my grandchildren.

So in a way, as leaders of our community, we keep that in mind. We're doing this for our grandchildren. So we don't speak for ourselves. That's also something we're taught as Tlingits. To be a leader you have to have children in our community, otherwise you're just speaking for yourself. But if you have children, you're speaking for your children.

Madame Chair, I just wanted to ask to maybe let Mr. Frank know what the Council has come up with in regards to the king salmon in the annual report.

Thank you, Madame Chair.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard. Yeah, Mr. Frank, we have -- Mr. Howard has brought the issue to our attention during our proceedings and we've had a bit of discussion about the issue of the king salmon and how the process was -- where subsistence users didn't have the opportunity to really weigh in on the closure as it happened and it was reflected around the table that this is not necessarily just an issue specifically in Angoon but across the board.

At this time we have taken that testimony and information and plan to forward it to the Federal Subsistence Board in our annual report letter to them as an issue that is of importance to this Council and to subsistence users in our region.

So we appreciate the time that you have taken this morning to call in and offer additional testimony. It's a very important piece of our process to hear from as many constituents as possible about any emergent issues that happen within our region and we start building a record of information that we gather and are able to raise those issues to our next level within the Federal Subsistence Program.

Are there any other Council members that have questions for Mr. Frank at this time.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Again, Mr. Frank, thank you again for your time. I'd like to check to find out whether or not Mr. Kurt Whitehead from Klawock is on the line and ready to testify at this time.

MR. WHITEHEAD: Yes, I'm here.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great. Thank you, Mr. Whitehead. You have the mic at this time.

MR. WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you members of the board. First I want to thank you for all your time and efforts. It's a great thing. I'm a year-round resident of Klawock, Alaska. My wife and I operate a small hunting and fishing guide service. We've been year-round residents of Alaska since 2000. I came up here right after
college. Spent a lot of time taking around and guiding
hunters and fishermen on Baranof Island, Kuiu Island,
Prince of Wales Island, Kupreanof Island.

Currently the state of our deer
population on Prince of Wales, that's what I want to
talk to you about today, is not doing real well. In
fact it's so bad that we are suspending all of our deer
hunting operations. Last fall we only took four
hunters. They harvested four very small -- I would say
they were two-year-old bucks.

So we hunted all November, had great
clients, great weather. We saw one mature buck. It's
very complicated. I just got off the phone yesterday
with the Fish and Game biologist, the new area
biologist in Ketchikan. Basically there's three
factors that are driving it. You've got predation,
you've got harvest and you've got the carrying capacity
of the land, the habitat.

The most concerning thing for me is to
listen to experts that know a lot more about the
habitat than I do talk about how the carrying capacity
in Prince of Wales has changed so dramatically that
even though we have a viable deer population at the
moment, one hard winter and we're going to be brought
to our knees.

I've seen that on Baranof Island
winters of '06, '07, '08 and '09. The deer population
was pretty much extinguished on the east side, but they
bounced back so resiliently that now at the Board of
Game meetings they've increased the limit to five or
six bucks. So you contrast that with Prince of Wales
where we're just beginning a slide for a variety of
reasons.

I guess the two points that I wanted to
drive home today with my time was I'd like to -- I sit
on the Craig AC. I'm very thankful. There's going to
be some proposals. The deadline for the Federal
proposals are due on the 27th. Each AC, these are fish
and game ACs, advisory committees, has passed several
proposals regarding the deer population.

One of them is to get rid of the
January deer season and the other one is to get rid of
the doe season. We know that the numbers of the doe
season roughly are 100 deer a year, but those are the breeders. So it's a multiplying effect. So over the course of five years you've taken out 500 deer, but you've also taken out all of their reproduction, the future generation.

So my hope is that one particular proposal has traction at the upcoming meeting and also the January season. I know it's a contentious issue, but at the same time if you can't get your deer from January 15th until December 31st -- I mean it's not just the number of deer that are reported in January, it's also the unreported take. Again, that's an issue.

So, yeah, those two proposals hopefully you guys will put some consideration towards not having a doe harvest at all in Prince of Wales and not having a January deer season on Prince of Wales.

As far as the carrying capacity and the habitat, there's definitely some bigger issues that hopefully you guys can -- there's a lot more people out there that know more about it than I do, but the lack of old growth forest on Prince of Wales is really what's driving it.

One of the critical points that the area biologist left me with was it doesn't matter what the harvest is, it doesn't matter what the predation is, if the deer can't survive, if they don't have the right habitat, it doesn't matter. Again, he said we're one hard winter away from being brought to our knees with our deer population on Prince of Wales.

I'd like to point out that it doesn't matter to me if I ever get another deer hunter. That's not why I'm on the phone. I'm going to live and die here. So after multiple talks of -- last one yesterday with one of the Klawock Tribe. The only interest I have is so I can put meat in my freezer when I'm an old man and so that all the future generations can have deer on the island.

GMU-2 is the only game management unit in Alaska that has one red meat animal. There's no other. We don't have moose, we don't have elk, we don't have caribou, we don't have mountain goat. We're the only one. So that's why with deer it's such a contentious issue. We have fish and I won't get into
Anyway, just wanted to pass on I feel very strongly about -- even if it's only 100 deer that we're saving by taking away the doe season, those are 100 breeder deer. They're 100 females. So the next generation, the next year you're conceivably saving -- you know, if they survive the winter, you could save 200 deer. The next year it's 400 deer. The next year 800 deer.

Anyway, thank you. I look forward to solving a complex Rubik's Cube because it really is. You've got three definitely major contributors to our healthy deer population on the island; predation, harvest and the habitat carrying capacity.

I'm finished.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Whitehead. Are there any questions or comments from the Council. Mr. Hernandez and then Mr. Howard.

Sorry.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. Mr. Whitehead, based on your testimony do you feel there's a conservation concern? That's question one.

MR. WHITEHEAD: I think the numbers and all of the people that I've talked to -- know there's a conservation concern. When I go out there and spend an entire month in the field and don't see one mature buck and we had great weather -- this fall we had great hunting weather, great clients. I was out there for, let's see, two weeks solid. We have younger deer on the island. We have some does. The statistics, the numbers from ADF&G are showing a definite dramatic decline.

I just asked Ross to get me the numbers. I know that at the East POW AC meeting one of the community members had the numbers and it's fallen off dramatically the last two years. I don't think they've got the numbers for the last hunting season yet, but there's proof. There's biological statistical
evidence, factual proof that the deer herd is in decline.

At the Board of Game meetings, the hunting regulations, I was up there representing the Craig AC and that was one of the missions was to get the wolf management changed, so we have done that. Currently there's no doe season for sport hunting regulation and there's no January season, so I think those are the two best proposals that the Subsistence Board could put forth.

Yeah, there is a real concern. It's not just me. We wrote a letter -- we as in several members of the community. Another example, Don, he's a retired teacher of Klawock. He used to be a teacher in Hydaburg. He's been here for -- I want to say 28 years. He felt so strongly about it that he and I and several other people penned a letter to the Fish and Game that said, hey, when you're seeing more wolves out there than deer, we have a -- Houston, we have a problem.

When he was going up on the mountain in August and I think six hunting trips, and he was only successful on one mountain. There was a pack of wolves on several of the mountains. I saw more wolves -- I saw more deer bones and deer hair in wolf sign, fresh and old, the last several years than I've ever seen. So I feel confident that we can bring that predation down next winter. The wolf season will be basically completely open. No more quota system, so there should be a lot fewer wolves on the landscape.

I think the most concerning thing is it's not the harvest, although that's a big point, but it's the landscape, the carrying capacity. When you have these clearcuts, the clearcuts are great when there's no snow, but you can't get any food in them in the winter and they do have the old growth that has all the food available and they can find shelter and those deer can eat and they can eat through the winter.

But then you have a whole bunch of stands that have grown up into stem exclusion and so you've got stands that the last time they were cut was when the pulp mill was open in '96, '97, right in there, and those stands, if they haven't been thinned, they get -- you can't -- I'm sure I'm preaching to the
choir if you've ever been to Prince of Wales. There's
places you drive around you can't even see in there.
It's habitat for a mouse and a shrew. That's about it.
People can't go in there. Wolves don't go in there.
Deer can't go in there. Bear don't. Nothing goes in
there.

So you've got this limited -- the way
it's been explained to me by again people that know a
lot more about the carrying capacity is you've got this
massive area -- Prince of Wales is the largest island
in Southeast behind Kodiak -- has this massive area
plus the habitat, the quality habitat to get the deer
through the winter is dramatically -- has been
dramatically reduced.

But to answer your question, yes,
there's a problem and I think it's going to get worse
and hopefully we won't have the winters of '06, '07,
'08, '09 which will really crush Prince of Wales.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. Mr.
Howard, you indicated that was question one, so I'm
assuming you have a question two.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I was hoping for the short answer, but I appreciate all
the details. The reason I've asked that question is
you have to keep in mind we're the Southeast Alaska
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, meaning that
subsistence has priority.

When we decide to support any type of
proposal, it's in favor of subsistence users. I could
be wrong. I've been wrong once or twice in my life.
So if we decide to see there is a conservation concern,
it's going to have an impact on your business.

MR. WHITEHEAD I've already voluntarily
suspended all of my deer hunting operations, so it
doesn't matter to me.

MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair. We have a
representative on the Council, I take him at his word
and we've accomplished quite a bit concerning the wolf
population on Prince of Wales Island and
I'm always going to refer to that work as pretty good
cooperation between this Council and State and
working with the staff that we have to address those
issues.

I appreciate your comments, but I think you have to keep in mind this issue has been looked at forwards and backwards. So thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Are there other Council members that would like to comment on Mr. Whitehead's testimony at this time.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Whitehead, I appreciate the time that you took to call in today and give your testimony. I would also like to mention that in your testimony I heard that you had potential ideas of regulatory changes that might fix the issue that you spoke upon and I would remind you that the call for wildlife proposals is currently open for the Federal Subsistence Program and those proposals are due on March 27th. You can find that information online at the Office of Subsistence Management on how to submit a proposal if you have not done so in the past.

Also the local Ranger District has staff that would be able to help you formulate that proposal if you haven't submitted one through the system before. That might be a way to address some of the concerns that you have had that our Council most likely won't be able to have time during our meeting to take up on your behalf. But we encourage you or anyone else within your community to put proposals forward through the system.

With that I'm going to move into some of the other business and I do want to mention to the folks that are on the phone if you're hoping to testify that we'll try to carve out some additional time this afternoon for additional tribal and public testimony. So we will check back in with you.

But we do have a number of really important items that we also need to hear about today and we have some time-sensitive flights. Some staff are going to be leaving and so I want to make sure that we allot for time to have those briefings.
I would like to ask Mr. Mark Burch from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, he's the Special Projects Coordinator. He has a brief update for the Council that's a follow-up on the proposed changes for the sport fishing guide and charter log book. Thank you for coming forward, Mr. Burch. The microphone is yours.

MR. BURCH: Thank you, Madame Chair and others for helping me to figure this out. I'm Mark Burch with the Department of Fish and Game. I understand you have questions about the logbook system and carrying that on. There is a website where you can provide comments as a part of the -- consistent with the Administrative Procedures Act in Alaska and I forwarded that address to the coordinator for your use.

The discontinuation of the Freshwater Logbook Program was part of the fiscal year 19 and fiscal year 20 budget reduction process. Since the program is no longer funded by a license fee, it's not self-supporting. Until the legislation is adopted that would implement a freshwater guide business license fee, there will likely be no Freshwater Logbook Program.

The Saltwater Logbook Program will remain in place for the time being due to the need for that data for Southeast Alaska King Salmon Treaty obligations and halibut management.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Burch.

Are there any questions for Mr. Burch from the Council.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: We've heard several times that the concern isn't what's happening outside the streams. The concern is what's happening close to the streams. I mean time and time again we hear that and now we're eliminating the logbook that could give us some information on what's happening around the streams. It's a valuable part of that and I understand that the State is doing it on a budget concern not
necessarily a resource concern.

Madame Chair, I referenced that at the beginning of our meeting that my concern with the State's economics data where they don't have the money to manage the resource and now this is a good example of it. So now I'm concerned that you no longer have that data for us to reference to or the State to reference to on what's happening in the streams.

I kind of understand this because I fill out a State logbook every year in regards to rockfish release, king salmon release, halibut release. What we kept in the cooler.

Madame Chair, this is an example of what's coming for the State, I believe.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Mr. Hernandez and then Mr. Yeager.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Burch, for bringing that to our attention. That's a very bad idea, I think. It's unfortunate that it's a budget issue. It should be a resource issue. This Council has been very concerned with the accountability of sport activities, you know, on our Federal waters. It's been a big issue.

I don't know if the -- seeing as how that activity takes place on Federal waters if sport fishing logbooks could be mandated by the Federal system. That would be an interesting question to bring forward.

Also in regards to logbooks in general it's very valuable information. Your Saltwater Logbook Program. I think the Council would support that program actually be expanded. We've seen a need for more accountability in the non-guided sport fish industry that essentially is outfitter guide I guess it would be. The outfitting industry would be the proper term where lodges rent skiffs to sport fishermen and it's a commercial activity.
It's not covered by any guiding requirements, but in my view it's guiding. You don't go out in a boat anymore without a GPS with all the information you need to catch fish. There's information passed back and forth in the lodges. I mean it's just flat out guiding. It's a major loophole to bypass a lot of regulation.

I think one thing that would really help to see the impacts of that industry would be a logbook program that the outfitters that are supplying boats to people sport fishing would be required to take logbook information from them at the end of each day. I would strongly encourage that. I think your whole program sounds like it's really not fulfilling its very crucial role in managing our resources.

So that's just my comment.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair. I mirror a lot of the comments from Mr. Howard and Mr. Hernandez, but I have my own concerns with this. Being a guide for over 15 years, I'm very familiar with the Logbook Program. I think it's very important. The Saltwater Logbook as well as the Freshwater Logbook show use. They both document fish that are taken out of the water, that document areas and where they're taken out and by who. I think that's very important.

We are in a data-driven management era where numbers are very important. Not only to the resource, but they're also important to show use. Our footprint, where we're at, what we're doing with how many people. As much as I appreciate not paying a guide license fee this year, I would have gladly paid in order to attempt to keep this Freshwater Logbook Program in place.

If there was ever an opportunity for an area to go limited entry as far as permits or guiding goes, whether it's through the Forest Service or State of Alaska, my logbooks show that use and my logbooks
show where I'm at and my history of guiding and what species I take out of the water. I think this is a huge mistake and I just feel that we're really dropping the ball here with having any logbook taken out of the picture.

I understand it is a funding issue and I appreciate your presentation, but there needs to be more accountability. I hate to add work to Albert and I at the end of the day by doing a logbook, but I don't know of any guide that wouldn't put in the extra time to keep track of the resource that we use. So big mistake.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Yeager.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I have a question first. Are the freshwater guide permits issued by the Forest Service?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I do not know.

Mr. Burch, do you know?

MR. BURCH: Madame Chair, I don't know. Perhaps we could ask somebody from the Forest Service.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Is there any Forest Service staff in the room that can answer the question of Mr. Douville?

Mr. Gunn, please come forward.

MR. GUNN: Thank you, Madame Chair. I am Tyler Gunn, ranger on Prince of Wales Island for the Forest Service. Yes, the Forest Service does permit freshwater guiding on Prince of Wales Island and around the Tongass.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Okay. With every other
fishery we have I go get a subsistence permit for Federal water. I am obligated to keep a log immediately for subsistence. So why would that not apply for a guided freshwater permit system to be obligated to keep that same log. I'm also obligated the same way with subsistence via the State and saltwater.

This should not be a gap. It should be a requirement and not have to depend on funding from the State or whoever. That should be a part of the permitting process and be automatic in my opinion.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Possibly to add some clarification. The freshwater guide license is issued by the State. It is issued through ADF&G. You do apply separately for the saltwater guide license and then you go apply for a freshwater guide license. Now if I am guiding on National Forest, say a river system the Forest Service oversees, then I have to be using an operating plan or permit, which I believe Mr. Gunn was referencing.

So there are State-regulated freshwater streams. There's also Federally-regulated streams. You have to lay those out in your operating plan which you submit to the Forest Service. So kind of dual things happening here. But the Freshwater Logbook that we're seeing going away is from the ADF&G side of the house.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you for that clarification because I was getting confused.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. I think they covered that question, but I have to agree with Mr. Douville because when I go get sockeyes, if I don't snip the tails right away and somebody shows up -- and most of the time I'm like a one-man show out there. I'm pulling the net and trying to get everything out of the net and be responsible, clean the fish. And once in a while I kind of miss a step and forget to clip the fin, but eventually all the fish
ends up in the smokehouse.

So you have a requirement on the subsistence user and you're taking away a requirement from a non-subsistence user. The fines are pretty heavy. They take your net and everything else. If they could get away with it, I believe the smokehouse would be taken as well.

So I think for management purposes I think that the logbook should stay in place. If you require one user group to jump through all these hoops, you should require all of them to.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: I have something I would like to add about the saltwater guide book, if there was any way it could be added. I'm a sport guide and we fish out on the ocean in front of Craig. It seems like most of the guides I think have become more and more conscientious over the years for the resource, but some things that I see like during king salmon closures they're still over there beating up on the king salmon. They can't keep them. They're obviously just doing it to make their clients happy for being able to catch and release. I think especially now that that resource is generally in trouble I think that there should be more enforcement of things like that.

Another thing, the halibut, we catch a lot of small halibut and a lot of the guides, I wouldn't say a high percentage but there are quite a few of them, that will sort through the halibut, they'll have five or ten-pounders, and they get caught down in the throat and they just rip them out and throw them away and hope for a bigger one. I see that as some resource concerns. I don't know how else you would change it other than have maybe enforcement observing more.

I had something else, but I forgot what I was going to say.
Oh, another thing. It wasn't as bad this last year, but the year before especially probably half of the king salmon catch was being taken by sea lions and I think it would be beneficial to have a place in the logbook to put those just to record where at least some known numbers of king salmon were going just to add to the data.

That's all I have to say.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Winrod. Mr. Burch, can you remind us -- I don’t know if you covered it, but is there a comment period right now regarding this issue?

MR. BURCH: Madame Chair, thank you for that reminder. I believe I probably missed that. The comment period is open through April 8th of this year. I do appreciate this opportunity to come here and report and encourage you and the RAC to submit comments through that process.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Burch.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair. Is there someone that enforces these logbooks? Where I come from you go in Icy Straits and you see these little skiffs that come out of this one lodge that just went around crazy up there. The same place, same lodge, one time I was in Juneau and I saw a whole van load -- I thought that was just one van load of fish coming out of that and then another van came coming in and just full of fish.

I said where is that coming from and some person told me and I said who can put away that much halibut and keep it from freezer burn. Even when I vacuum pack and I glaze it first and after a year it's not any good, just burned.

But who enforces the logbook thing? When these little skiffs are running around out there, there should be some way that they should have to keep a logbook too. It's just not fair when they're out
there and being able to just get humongous amounts of
fish that they're not going to use.

I've grown up putting fish away for
most of my life and I can't figure out where is this
all going. Like I said, those two vans came from the
same lodge in Icy Straits and they were full. I mean
full. So who enforces the logbooks? Is there some
Fish and Game that comes around and checks them or how
is that taken care of?

Thank you.

MR. BURCH: Through the Chair. I don't
have a lot of specific information on enforcement, but
I do understand that the State's guide logbook is a
State regulation, so that would be enforced by the
Alaska Troopers and the State of Alaska. Beyond that I
don't have a lot of specific detail.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Burch.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: You're correct. Just to
go on to that, the Alaska State Troopers are in charge
of checking the logbooks and making sure they're filled
out. Started before the beginning of a fishing day and
then also they're submitted on time.

The Coast Guard can do spot checks on
logbooks, but they are monitoring and looking for the
charter halibut side of it mainly. If you don't have a
trooper, then you don't have enforcement necessarily
happening in your area.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Yeager.

Mr. Douville and then Mr. Howard.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Madame Chair.
This I think would put a gap in our information and
have less accountability with freshwater guides. I
don't know how you would initiate a process to include
a logbook with their permits like I have to have when I
subsistence fish in a Federal stream. It's not
difficult and it doesn't seem to be expensive. In Unit
there isn't that many of them, so it shouldn't be
difficult, but I don't know how the process works
because we haven't dealt with to my knowledge anything
like that. I do see that it does have some importance.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Douville.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I'm sitting here thinking how to solve his problem and
how certain people release halibut and then they fish
king salmon. We have guides from Washington and
Montana work at the place I work at and it seems like
it's all money-driven. To make sure the client gives
them the biggest tip at the end of the day they'll
sacrifice the resource for that.

When I say that, you'll have a guide
coming and bragging about releasing -- oh, they just
had a wonderful time. They released 20 undersized king
salmon. It takes all I can not to say anything in
front of the client, so anyone that knows me if I walk
away and don't finish the conversation I'm not happy.

So I'm wondering if there's any
thoughts about changing the guide system. I mean I'm
going to get pushback and a lot of people aren't going
to be happy, but there's always a reason to -- the
thought process of -- as an example, no one in Angoon
can be a hunting guide because we haven't hunted with a
guide for seven years to qualify as a bear hunter even
though Admiralty Island is known as the largest bear
population per capita.

None of us are qualified. Yet you
could bring someone in from Montana and they could be a
guide tomorrow as long as they can pass the Coast Guard
license and the drug testing and all that that goes
along with it. Then when you hire some young college
kid to do that, their natural tendency is going to go
after as much money as possible. In their mind it's a
tip from the client. So you go back to sacrificing the
resource and I'm not a big fan of that.

This is going to be my 17th year
guiding and I know Chatham now like the back of my hand
and where to be and when to be there and where not to
go and so on and so forth. So I think something has to be looked at in that regard as far as not just letting anybody on the water.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Mr. Burch, you have a response to that?

MR. BURCH: I definitely don't have all the answers, but I can report -- of course, the biologist yesterday, Mr. Harris, promised to pass along a recommendation from this group to do some education to discourage excessive catch and release of undersized chinook salmon and I can say that he copied me on an email as he followed through on that promise yesterday evening.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Burch. Mr. Burch has mentioned that they would welcome comment for this by the April 8th deadline, is that correct, from this Council. I would like to ask if this Council wishes to put comment forward.

While you're thinking about that, Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Realizing that what Mr. Howard talked about and I've seen this happen in a lot of places, the undersize king salmon that are being caught, and this seems to be more now. I know comments probably from the trawlers as well as some of the guides that know that certain types of bait as well as barbless hooks will hook the fish only in the mouth and they won't swallow it. So some of these comments might come in handy later on.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Burch, for bringing the issue back to our table and I think we need a little bit of time to decide how we want to proceed if we're able to offer comment back regarding this. We'll move into some of our other proceedings and probably make that decision as a Council a little bit later today.
MR. BURCH: Thank you again, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Next I'd like to ask for -- next we have on our agenda, the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Assessment update and I believe Mr. Tyler Gunn and Mr. Earl Stewart are going to come before us for that.

MR. STEWART: So, Madame Chair, Honorable members of the Council, thank you for giving us time. I'm going to go through and cover several aspects of it but I probably won't go into the full depth, I'm going to yield to my colleague Ranger Gunn to give a much more detailed or deliberative assessment.

Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis was really an effort to try to integrate all programs across the next 10 to 15 years, recognizing that the area covered was Prince of Wales and adjacent islands, so it covers about 1.8 million acres. My original tasking for this was to conduct this in a manner that recognized all resources, covered a long term, 10 to 15 years, looked at all the landscape, but I asked that it be done in an external way, that a group be put together to come forward with recommendations on what that might entail.

I want to start off by commending the Prince of Wales Landscape Assessment team, which had representatives from, I think, 11 communities or something like that on Prince of Wales. They maintained their own meetings, held public meetings that they could incorporate whoever wanted to join, the Forest Service did provide technical assistance to their questions as they went through their deliberative process and they had about a year, roughly, it took them a few months to build their governance processes, but it would be my failing and I would be remiss if I didn't start off by acknowledging the Prince of Wales Landscape Assessment team, it was a phenomenal effort.

On or about June 5th, 2017 they actually gave me a proposal. I will say it's the most detailed and extensive proposal I've ever seen as a Federal employee. It covered several dozen pages and covered all the aspects that they came up with that they thought how it should be applied. We took that
forward as an alternative and as we worked through the process, the outcome and the draft Record of Decision was as close to that proposal as I could get. There were a few areas of things that they recommended that were either outside of my authority or outside of my capabilities, such as facilities in wilderness or action on other lands, land bases. A few areas where they requested certain items I recognized there were other contributing factors that had to be considered, so if you're talking about preparing some specific road use or road base, I recognized that you'd have to have the rock available for that, so there's a few things that were added. For the most part it was their proposal in the draft Record of Decision that went out last fall and then as of this last Saturday, on March 16th, I joined those members that were available to join us in Klawock and actually signed the final Record of Decision.

I'm going to go through a host of actions associated with that just for your general awareness.

Covered aquatics and restoration and watersheds up to 200 miles in-stream. Fisheries work, whether it's fertilization, incubations, stocking, barrier modifications, aquatic organism passage, large wooded debris, historic water flows, or invasive species. Recreation actions such as up to three cabins, or up to 12 new three-sided shelters. Trail maintenance. Signage. Interpretation. Up to three new campgrounds. Up to eight over the snow access points. Recreation enhancements within those areas for public uses, whether it be thinning, pruning or clearing or even fresh and saltwater access points for kayaking or for boat -- for small boat -- personal boat access. There are several vegetative management components that had been brought forward with many of the interested parties thus far. Their proposal is basically a 10 to 15 year timber program. In general, it's about one-third old growth, it's about two-thirds young growth. It really tries to meet the bridge timber advisory aspects of the Tongass Advisory Committee. And also seeks to still fulfill the Tongass transition from old growth to young growth intent.

The initial proposal that was offered was 25 million board feet in the first five years, followed by 15 million board feet a year of old growth.
in the next five years and then evaluation at year 10
or 11 to determine how to proceed with expected about
five million in the following -- in the last five years
of that 15 year period. The remaining young growth is
going to be put out at about three million board feet
in the first five or six years and possibly seven
years. And then at some point in time the availability
of young growth increases tremendously and then you
have a business incentive to make that shift.

It also includes about 4,500 acres a
year of thinning for wildlife and pre-commercial uses.
This meets some of the interest that you heard earlier
about the dense stands that exist. We recognize the
habitat implications of those younger stands and they
have a very temporal component when you need to go in
and thin those for optimizing the opportunity for
wildlife utilization. It also incorporates a number of
slash treatments, which have been a challenge in the
past in those thinning stands. If you get too much
slash on the ground you can actually impede traffic
flow, et cetera, and so they're talking about a host of
slash treatments to try to remedy that. And then
recognition that there are small operators that need
access to wood within a quarter mile of the road and
for their use in yarding. And then also it's smaller,
roughly less than 3 million acres, or up to 3 million
acres -- I'm sorry, three million board feet.
Recognize the importance of cone collection, invasive
treatments, invasive plant treatments, and then use a
host of prescriptions to accomplish this.

Now, the last items that I would
recognize and cover had to do with items associated
with subsistence interests.

One of the items is that there was a
recognition that within communities there was a need
for a different action that either minimized the impact
or improved the conditions for those communities. And
I think the barrier, the effort on that is about a five
year -- five mile circle around those communities.
Also recognition that a need for fire wood or biomass
continues to be an issue over there, and so a host of
road management components to try to provide those
roads to try to keep them open as long as possible in
the three to five year range so that they can be
available depending on the conditions of the roads and
everything.
There was some significant harvest restrictions set forth, nothing harvesting -- limiting harvesting north of the Twenty Road and within the value comparison unit 5280, or 5280, which is effectively that north end in the Point Protection, Point Baker interest associated with that.

And then making sure that those thin stands also provided for wildlife utility.

Now, that's a quick overflight of that effort. I would yield to my colleague to my right, Ranger Gunn, for his followup.

MR. GUNN: For the record my name is Tyler Gunn, I'm the Ranger for Prince of Wales Island. Thank you, Forest Supervisor Stewart, you pretty much covered most of my thunder right there.

I was just going to go over a little bit about our contracts and what we're going to do with them. We're going to be working with stewardship contracts. Forest Supervisor Stewart mentioned all the restoration we're going to be doing, they're going to be included in the contracts with the timber. And I just wanted to go over some of the timber, because I know there's concerns with the productive old growth on Prince of Wales Island.

Right now, productive old growth on Prince of Wales Island and the surrounding islands is about 750,000 acres of productive old growth. With what we're going to log in old growth over the next 15 years, that's going to take in about 23,300 acres and out of that, 10,000 acres is going to be clear-cut and about 13,300 acres is going to be uneven age management, it will be a partial cut with helicopter and also some, what we call Gap, which are maximum two acres in size.

And then also with the 430 million feet of young growth that we'll be selling over the same period of time, that covers about 19,400 acres of total young growth acres that we'll be cutting over those 15 years.

Within that, Mr. Stewart, also mentioned the five miles around every community. What there will be is there will be no clear-cutting
harvesting within that five mile radius of all the communities and we'll just do these partial little patch cuts in there so this will -- and try to keep some of the deer corridors available, it will also produce some more forbes in those two acre patches. Also within these visual comparison units, if we have any cuts larger than 20 acres, we got to keep legacy of a minimum of 30 percent of the old growth in all the visual comparison units that we're going into.

Also, I wanted to talk about some of the other protections we are taking care of.

Right now with the wolf population over there, we still have under the wolf agreements that we have with the State of Alaska, we are protecting any wolf dens that we find, and we actually make about a 1,200 foot buffer around that wolf den, and also we're doing the same for bear dens, also, it comes out to about 100 acres, roughly 104 acres I think it is, of protection around either the wolf dens and/or the bear dens.

And that's basically what I was going to talk about on the timber end of it, and thank you very much, Madame Chair.

MR. STEWART: If I may follow up, there's one other item I should have recognized also. The public meetings have been broadcast as of this morning in a news release, so the next workshops associated with trying to help with prioritization and help the Agency determine when to go forward with some aspects, are set for in Klawock at the VoTech Center for April 6th.

So, thank you. Yield back.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. Hernandez, and then Mr. Howard.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you for coming here and summarizing your actions there, that's very helpful. I know it's just happened here this weekend.

First of all, Mr. Stewart, I did have
some specific requests for you in regards to the roadless issue, are you going to be here, I don't know if we're going to get to roadless after lunch, do you -- are you going to be here after lunch at all or do you have to fly?

MR. STEWART: So Mr. Hernandez, I will make the time to be here, both with the roadless section whenever it is presented by my colleague Nicole Grewe, but I will stay around even if it means delaying my departure.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. That's good to know.

In regards to this Prince of Wales plan, you know, this Council's expressed a lot of concerns about what was going to happen on Prince of Wales obviously. And, you know, it has to do with roadless, you know, the whole roading issue and habitat issues on Prince of Wales are just extensive. We all know that, we hear tons of testimony, we heard more this morning. I think, you know, we're really concerned about habitat issues moving forward with this plan.

We're also going to be focused on something I don't think you mentioned and that is, you know, with the harvest that's going to -- the old growth harvest that's going to take place in the next 10 to 15 years, we don't know now where that harvest is going to take place specifically. There will be a lot of areas that may end up, we don't know, but may end up in harvest plans, timber sales that are really going to directly affect how people go about their hunting and other activities, you know, and I don't know how you plan, in the future, on addressing those concerns, specifically about how the public is going to have input in those issues.

So I think that's my first question, for the answer.

MR. STEWART: Actually that's a great question, Mr. Hernandez, I appreciate you offering that.

The meeting I mentioned starting on April 6th is one of many public meetings, or public
workshops, effectively. During those workshops, each of the resource specialists will present their program elements that they're looking at and they will seek to get the public's engagement on how those should be prioritized, how they should be laid out or operated on. So there's multiple opportunities in the oncoming years, and they talk about fall meetings and spring meetings, I'm not sure exactly how it'll play out but the first one starts on April 6th in an effort to do that, to try to help get -- maintain the public's engagement as it moves forward year to year to year. Those items then will be collected up and then whatever comes from those meetings I will then have available to public members and -- that can write in or add additional information if they're not able to attend in person.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Thank you for that. Also are these -- are there going to be similar meetings throughout the next 10 to 15 years, like are you going to be offering up, you know, specific timber sales with planning processes that go into each timber sale or does this plan kind of authorize overall timber harvest that doesn't require, you know, specific timber sales to be analyzed; I'm a little unclear about how that's going to work.

MR. STEWART: And I certainly recognize that because it's unclear to us because we've not been through one. The first one on April 6th probably will set the stage to give a lot more information and the awareness to those members of the public that choose to attend, or those that choose to engage at a later date. At this point in time we do have all the different components from recreation, fish, wildlife, forest management, et cetera, that will be presented at that meeting and then the members that are in attendance or those that write in and respond later will be helping give advice and counsel, if you will, on where we should go, when we should go there and how we should approach it.

So it's yet to be seen how it's actually going to play out because all we have at this point in time is the presentation to be received by the public or those that attend.

So I certainly yield back, I don't know exactly what the outcome's going to be at this point in
time but I look forward to that continued dialogue.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Just one other quick question, where's that meeting going to be held?

MR. STEWART: The meeting is at the Klawock VoTech on Saturday April 6th and I don't remember exactly the time.

MR. HERNANDEZ: We could find that out.

MR. STEWART: Yeah.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I'd like to, you know, continue a little on, if that's okay, Mr. Howard, I got a lot of things to go here.

MR. HOWARD: (Nods affirmatively)

MR. HERNANDEZ: We have, you know, some major overall concerns as well. This Council, you know, recommended and the Federal Subsistence Board approved a measure this past year to limit deer harvest for non-subsistence hunters on Prince of Wales, Unit 2, Prince of Wales Island. The Department of Fish and Game is challenging that decision. They say there's no evidence of a conservation concern. We disagree with that. However, Fish and Game submitted comments in your EIS process and those comments, and I'll kind of summarize them here, if anybody disagrees with what they said, please come forward and correct me, but they basically said that given the cumulative impacts of what the Forest Service proposed in their Alternative 2, which essentially became your decision, was Alternative 2 with a few modifications, in combination with the fact that the State of Alaska has timber lands that they plan on aggressively harvesting on Prince of Wales, there is still many thousands, tens of thousands of acres of Native Corporation lands that have yet to be logged in the near future, we've had Legislative actions that have traded Mental Health Trust and University Trust lands on Mitkof Island, Wrangell Island and other places for land on Prince of Wales Island; so, you know, you're kind of focusing on your 225 million board feet of old growth timber, plus there's, you know, I don't know how many hundreds of millions of board feet of other timber that's going to be harvested within this 10 year period, Fish and Game Department said that they were concerned that selection
of Alternative 2 would present a conservation concern for subsistence uses of deer on Prince of Wales Island.

Then they subsequently told us that there are no conservation concerns regarding deer hunting on Prince of Wales Island.

So either there are or there aren't, but, presently, but one thing's for sure, there's very likely to be in the future.

And I would say to the Fish and Game Department, that we are -- by taking actions that we feel are beneficial to conservation, we are trying to forestall a conservation crises on Prince of Wales Island.

I would ask the Fish and Game Department, you know, at what point do you take action on a conservation concern? Do you wait until it's a crises or do you take action to try and prevent the crises?

That's a lot of, you know, what we're attempting to do here.

And I know in the whole scoping process you had a list of alternatives, four alternatives, there was a lot of comment that was critical of those four alternatives, so you kind of delayed the process, you came out with a fifth alternative, which was, in the view of my community, was a much more reasonable alternative and then we had some hope that maybe you were going to move in that direction, but, you know, you kind of went with basically Alternative 2, and a high level of old growth, and also a very high level of second growth harvest, which will impact the habitat as well. You know, that will turn those lands into, you know, clear-cut status and, I don't know, I just have to voice those concerns.

And I guess I would ask you, if you -- how strongly you considered those Fish and Game comments in your selection of Alternative 2?

MR. STEWART: So there's a host of components that you offer, Mr. Hernandez, and I'm going to try to step back and walk through a few of the others first.
You acknowledged the Sealaska land exchange that was authorized, I think, in National Defense Authorization Act in 2014 or so, something like that. That's one big land exchange associated with Prince of Wales. You also spoke about the Mental Health Trust, which we just closed on Phase I this January, which involves lands on Prince of Wales and lands in the Ketchikan area. The Phase II side of it involves several communities and, specifically, one, being Wrangell, here, where we're at today. So there are constantly a lot of shifts in land across Southeast Alaska. I would always seek to try to balance that as to the needs of the communities and everything, but when it comes out in Federal appropriations or authorizations or whatever, it's kind of one of those things I just seek to try to follow as efficiently as I can.

In going through the alternatives, we looked at all the alternatives. And I think the bottom aspect of that is it would be way too deep to go into right now in front of everybody, but I really sought to honor the effort that was made by the Prince of Wales Landscape Assessment team in coming up with recommendations from the communities there. I've spent a lot of time and energy looking at each of the alternatives, looking at the impacts from those, or the environmental effects associated with each of those and felt that in the end that the recommendation that Prince of Wales Landscape Assessment team needed to be honored, recognized and followed up with, sir.

That's a simpler answer.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, and I understand that. I realize that's what drove the process and I, you know, personally find that unfortunate because those of us that live on the north end of the island, we've always kind of viewed the -- it was essentially an outgrowth of the Prince of Wales POWCOC, we basically call it the Prince of Wales Chamber of Commerce group, you know, and they promote -- they promote development essentially to our view at the expense of conservation quite often. So that's just our view on that group.

However, I also want to point out that when you started to undertake this endeavor, which is several years ago now, was after the Forest Service had
committed to transitioning away from old growth harvest
and this was going to be a plan to, you know,
accomplish that. Since that time, several years ago,
we have kind of publicly acknowledged and it's been
stated several times in public forums, I've heard that,
you know, one of the focuses of this plan and this
transition was so that, you know, the existing mills
could transition to a second growth industry and we
have the one major mill still on the island at Klawock
and they have basically said within the last several
years, that they have no intention of transitioning to
a second growth industry, they can't do it. They need
old growth to fill their markets.

So here we are in the situation where
you've provided them 10 years of old growth timber,
what's going to happen after that, either -- two
scenarios. Either they're going to go out of business
or they're going to continue a very strong lobbying
effort with our Congressional Delegation and State
authorities to get more old growth at the end of this
10 year plan. So I'm skeptical, I'm very skeptical of
your commitment to transition to a second growth
industry.

We're also seeing that this second
growth industry is basically dominated by a couple of
timber companies that export timber in the round to,
you know, foreign countries. And I don't see -- I
don't see any efforts to -- under this plan, to try and
-- that would encourage any local processing and
industry at the end of this planning period. And the
amount of capitalization of these large timber
interests that are getting into the export market, I
feel is just going to dominate the whole industry at
the expense of what you're hoping to accomplish with
building a local economy.

I don't know, do you have any comments
on your efforts to transition to a second growth
industry and promote a local industry in the second
growth field within the course of this plan?

MR. STEWART: So if it pleases the
Council, I was the person who signed the Forest Plan
Amendment that sought to make the transition. That was
really based heavily on the public comments that were
received, the environmental analysis associated with
that, but had underpennings associated with the Tongass
Advisory Committee and the recommendations that they made, several of those recommendations are cultural and organizational but several of them are more tactical or strategic. Those items under the Tongass Advisory Committee focused on trying to have bridge timber in the intervening years, with the recognition of a transition and which we were looking at under the decision in the plan amendment was probably about 16 years out, something like that. It did -- sets the stage for many other actions, such as inventory associated with both old growth and young growth and we've been working on that now for the -- I think this is the third year, three years and we're going forward, continuing forward with that to try to help fill out a more data rich assessment that would help then drive and determine what that transitional timeline is.

Along those lines, the intent with this decision is to recognize that it's about one-third old growth but two-thirds young growth so that it provides enough so that there is a reason or rationale or business incentive to try to make young growth go from a marketing standpoint, from a business standpoint.

Along with that there is the acknowledgement that a heavy percentage of that is export at this point in time. I can only hope that that actually has the market capability to actually shift that so that it can.

The Tongass Advisory Committee also recognized in the Forest Plan decision -- or Forest Plan Amendment, a decision recognized that there is an old growth need that continues forward at about five million board feet that has to do with very small market interest such as the music wood industry or some of the small operators. We often think about the larger mills, larger mill on Prince of Wales but there's also about 13 or so, you know, other smaller operators that we're seeking to provide.

The Forest Service has a duty as a multiple use agency to provide for a multitude of uses and so it becomes very complex and very complicated real quickly.

If I could close out with the challenge cost share side of it and the inventory that's been done, this is actually also taken on a work force development component that they'll literally try to
bring in younger adults -- well, bring in people who
are interested in working in the industry and helping
with the inventory effort to try to teach, train and et
cetera, and so we're on, I think, our third year or
fourth year now in training with that. This year we
have May the 6th set up for Forest inventory training
there on Prince of Wales, May 13th or that week is for
aquatics and fisheries, and then May 20th is set up for
soils and hydrology, I think. But continuing to try to
train folks so that they can get the skill set
development to be able to find jobs and work in their
local area. And so we would certainly offer that from
a continuation of business interests and developments
of those individuals, that those training scenarios and
classes that are set up for each of those weeks are a
great opportunity to try to build that out.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Can we take a
question from Mr. Howard, who's patiently waiting and
then come back.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Good idea.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great, thanks.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Now, I know even more about Prince of Wales than I did
about an hour ago.

(Laughter)

MR. HOWARD: Just a thought, Mr.
Hernandez, Kootznoowoo Incorporated does own land on
Prince of Wales that they haven't logged yet. The good
news of that is when I was a board of director we
decided to look at carbon credits, which means we're
not going to cut that wood, we're going to sell those
credits to California, which has a law in place, as an
example, if I wanted to start a business and it was
going to pollute stuff down in California, you could
buy carbon credits in Alaska, and so there's a market
for that and maybe you should encourage the businesses
to look at that. If they can't use second growth,
maybe they could use the carbon credits of the second
growth and still have money coming in on line that they
own and they wouldn't cut it down.

My question is, the buffer zone for
wolves, that's surprising to me. Because growing up in
a community that lived off the land, my dad and my
brothers had this favorite spot called Jim’s Cove on
Admiralty Island we hunted, my dad would take a leaf
and he says, you guys better be ready and you don't
take a bad shot either, so he'd blow a deer call and it
looked like the Forest came alive, and you're going to
hear testimony from people saying that logging doesn't
affect deer hunting, well, I'll tell you what I came
back from the Army and our favorite spot was gone and
there was nowhere for these deer to come from. There
was no place for them to sit under a big tree. My dad
always said that deer are like people, if it's raining
they're not going to come out and walk around, they'll
sit under a big tree and wait for it to stop raining.
Well, my point being is there is an impact.

So that's that.

And the thing that amuses me about the
buffer zone for the wolves is the consideration for the
human aspect of the resource and the impact it has on
our ability to hunt deer and what it does for them,
there is no buffer zone for deer, we're going to cut it
down anyway it seems to be the way everything's headed.
I mention the buffer zone because I've asked about it
in the past and the answer was the State and the Forest
Service have two different buffer zones, so if it's on
State land the buffer zone is a lot less, maybe one
lone tree, you leave the one tree so when someone looks
at it there's a tree there or it's what it seemed like
to me and the Forest Service has a different standard
as far as a buffer zone. And the reason I'm bringing
this up is that there's a place my son and I hunt that
got logged recently, it's in Florence Bay, it's across
from Angoon and the buffer zone was basically a two
tree deal and when the wind hit that, all those trees
are laying on the beach, you know, and by the way we
don't hunt there anymore because the deer aren't there
anymore.

So is there a way to bring consistency
to the buffer zone Southeast wide because you can also
fly over Admiralty Island and see where the trees have
fallen into the stream because it wasn't enough of a
buffer zone for the trees to protect each other against
wind and the wind took them down. You can also see it
when you hunt on those areas that the wind has taken
those trees down and they're second growth trees. I
think it's important now, more than ever, to look at
that because of our salmon situation in Southeast
Alaska. Is that part of the reason why some of them
aren't coming back, there's too many variables and not
enough answers.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Howard. Is there a response?

MR. STEWART: If it pleases the
Council, we need to see if our biologist is on because
he can give much more detail as it relates to the areas
around the wolf dens, et cetera. But, you know, can we
check and see if it's -- is it Luke Decker.....

MR. GUNN: Yeah.

MR. STEWART: .....I mean Luke.....

MR. GUNN: Yeah, Luke, are you on the
phone?

MR. DECKER: Yes, Mr. Howard, through
the Chair. Are you asking specifically about how the
Forest Service handles wolf den buffers or how the
State would handle the wolf dens on private and their
lands?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
It's how the consideration for the wolves created this
buffer zone versus everything else in the environment,
I guess is what I'm getting at. You have a 1,200 foot
buffer zone around a wolf den, but, yet, you clear-cut
everything that's important to a deer or, we call them
spruce chickens, I guess they have another name, but
I'm just wondering why there's two different standards
and when it come to wildlife in those areas when you're
creating buffer zones and so on and so forth.

MR. DECKER: Thank you for that
clarification, Mr. Howard. Currently, you know, during
the Forest Plan -- in the Forest Plan, wolves are
identified as species and that 1,200 foot buffer
through the Forest Plan analysis was chosen as a
protection for those -- for the wolves, and then on
Forest Service lands, you know, other species, the streams get some protections for the salmon, other species, herring nets, goslet nets, other species do get consideration and we follow those guidelines based on our Forest Plan decision there. I can't speak to why the deer, or some species were not chosen during that process for a specific protections, though we do maintain in the Forest Plan that we will maintain deer populations into -- while -- what is it, I believe it's 18 deer per square, is that what the Forest Service Plan.....

MS. DILLMAN: Is that that number may be necessary, yes.

MR. DECKER: So up to 18 may be necessary, and we have some -- and we do some analysis based on subsistence uses in those areas and what habitat is left in those areas pre- and post-harvest. We do have that analysis as part of the specialists report, they go into these projects. And the other biologist (indiscernible) try to put legacy over top of corridors and other areas at night be beneficial to protect in the future.

I think that's it from my end, do you have any other followup?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard, did you have a followup?

MR. HOWARD: No, no I don't, Madame Chair. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you, Mr. Decker.

I think, given the time and some growling stomachs, that we're going to take an hour lunch and come back. We have quite a bit on our agenda still this afternoon. We still have an update from Central Tongass Landscape Level Assessment, if the Forest Service is going to be giving that and we also have Nicole Grewe from the Forest Service to talk about the Alaska Roadless Rule. We are kind of breaking, with might be in a little bit of the middle of a discussion about Prince of Wales Landscape Level Assessment stuff so we may touch on that when we get back from lunch but let's try to get back here and get
back to work at 1:00 o'clock.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: So just before lunch we left off with the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Assessment and I just want to remind everyone that we have quite a few agenda items left and so I'm hoping we can have the discussions that we need to have on the next couple of agenda items but still be able to have time this afternoon to address some things that there are people on line standing by to do business with us.

So with that being said, I know Mr. Hernandez had a followup question so I'd like to start with him, and, again, the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Assessment and we have Mr. Stewart and Mr. Gunn at the table with us.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Cathy. Just, I guess I had one more question, I think and I do appreciate you listening to all my concerns and answering my questions before lunch, it was very helpful.

But I guess the main thing, some of the other Council members may be interested in as well, and I know when I go back to my community I want to be able to give them some information, so moving forward, you know, there are places that are pretty important to all of our community members that, you know, may be impacted, you know, by timber harvest here moving forward in this plan, so I was just wondering if you or Mr. Gunn could give us some guidance on what you think we need to do moving forward in this process if we have concerns and how best to get those addressed.

MR. STEWART: So, thank you, Mr. Hernandez. This is Earl Stewart, Forest Sup on the Tongass again. I wanted to step back one step first off and offer my sincere appreciation to all the members that have asked questions thus far. It demonstrates the passion and the value and the importance that they place in their communities and everything so I think your followup question is right in line with what would be my overall interest.
When I mentioned the next workshop coming up on April 6th, I did find out over lunch that it's between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., so it's an entire day. They will actually have maps of actions there at the Klawock VoTech Center, so it's the first opportunity to directly engage by looking at map locations, map actions and help with the prioritization or help with the overall design of the program. I think that's probably the most important step. And then continue to try to engage as you go into the fall meetings or the next spring's meetings. This is not an intent to try to minimize public engagement, this is actually, one, to try to keep the engagement throughout the entire process.

Beyond that, once you look at the maps, I think that you provide the information and the intel and the thoughts that you have as to prioritization or preference, however you want to frame that and I think that we'll work really deliberatively trying to fulfill those interests that are expressed. And so I appreciate the continued engagement.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you very much.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, sir.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Are there any other Council members that would like to ask questions regarding the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Assessment.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, hearing none, we'll move on to our next agenda item so please don't go anywhere Mr. Stewart. And you can decide if you would like Mr. Gunn to stay with us, this is the Central Tongass Landscape Level Assessment update.

MR. STEWART: So the Central Tongass Landscape Level analysis effort is literally a similar process that we talked about with Prince of Wales. In this case there is not a POWLAT group as there was on Prince of Wales. This simply has the components and the engagement that we receive from Wrangell, Petersburg, Kupreanof and Kake. They have not supplied a specific recommendation. They have brought a host of
recommendations through several public meetings that we've had where they looked at map, they gave advice or counsel or preferences and then marked the maps up and offered what they thought should occur or should be considered in that. So the Agency, in this particular project across Petersburg and Wrangell Ranger Districts, which are being done together in Central Tongass so it's larger than Prince of Wales because it has both districts combined into it, are literally going to be the comments that we receive from the public meetings, the information that we've received from publics that have mailed things in and this one's on track right now for a draft environmental impact statement for this summer. I think it's late June but it could easily be July, so it's literally a few months out.

I would continue to encourage folks to engage when the draft comes out because that will be the first chance you'll have to see how we collected the information that was supplied and it's also going to cover a 10 to 15 year type span and all resources and all programs. We do have a sidebar going on concurrently that we're working on, which is literally the organizational piece. I didn't mention on Prince of Wales because that organization has been somewhat stable in recent years but Petersburg and Wrangell, as we work forward on this one, really demands that we start looking at the work, what are the skill sets necessary to do that and how do we build an organization to meet that because it has a lot of potential to shift the direction of those resource programs and the interest between Petersburg and Wrangell.

So this one's really short and sweet, it's just in the earlier phases and with a draft coming out late June, possibly early July of 2019 and then we'll work forward from there and see where it ends.

And I yield back.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you, Mr. Stewart. Are there comments or questions from Council members.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, I'm
trying to formulate my question here. But I think the
Council also has some real concerns in Central Tongass, given the fact that, you know, there's a lot of the
deer hunting opportunities here in Central Tongass are quite limited, you know, as compared to the rest of the
northern and southern Tongass. And there's a lot of factors that I think are involved in that.

Central Tongass kind of has different situation, northern Tongass has kind of severe winters, a lot of limiting factors there to deer populations but it doesn't have the wolf predation problem. Southern Tongass has milder winters as a rule but, you know, more predation problems from wolves. Central Tongass kind of has some really severe winters and a lot of predation problems. And what was it, about 40 years ago now, the deer populations crashed in Central Tongass and they've never really recovered fully. And, you know, since then there has been a lot of habitat alterations thrown into the mix. You've got a migrating moose population that some people believe has, you know, affected the whole forage for other wildlife, deer, a lot of competition I think between moose and deer. I think that's a factor.

When you move forward with this Central Tongass plan, I think the Council would agree that there needs to be a lot of information needs gathered to really inform this decision. And I don't know, you know, what's ongoing as far as looking into this broader picture of, you know, habitat and impacts and, you know, how that all affects subsistence users. So do you have studies going on, information gathering moving into this process are you going to be relying on. I'm not aware of much happening there in that regards so maybe you know more than I do.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez. At this point in time it's, like I said, it's still in the developmental stage. We've taken the comments from the public. I would offer that no different than the value that I offered to the members on the Council for their advice and thoughts and recommendations trying to work through this which I seek to honor as fully as I can.

I also respect and honor our employees and the different technical skill sets. We have a full interdisciplinary team and so the technical
professionals from all resource programs will be engaged. I could probably get more intel from them but I don't personally have it with me today.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well, I would, yeah, certainly encourage them to take some, you know, thorough research to put into this in that area, I think, it's very important so we'll count on you to do that.

MR. STEWART: Well, certainly recognize and value the importance of subsistence and certainly as you look across, whether it's Prince of Wales or Central Tongass, or even if you go to the north end of the Tongass all the way up to Yakutat, each of the local line officers and their staff work diligently to try to represent the different resource needs. Now, there's always issues of conflicts or concern about how one thing's balanced against another but I would say that each of the members that I work with on the Staff are all very committed in trying to represent the local populations, the local publics and the communities that they represent.

So I think they'll take that very seriously, sir.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. Are there other comments or questions from the Council.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I have a quick question. Does the Central Tongass Landscape Level Assessment require an Section .810 subsistence analysis and, if so, are you -- how is that operating and have you had the hearings and how is that information incorporated?

MR. STEWART: So I certainly might want to yield to one of the technical professionals in the room, but my interpretation of that is as you get to certain stages you do have the .810 requirements under subsistence for those formal hearings and testimony to be taken as has happened on other projects. So I see it similar in project, the challenge on this one is that because it's got a multitude of locations you'll
have to just stage them over time on different days.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. And in followup to that, I'm encouraged to find out if you're having the government -- have the tribes been asking for government to government consultation with respect to the landscape level assessment?

MR. STEWART: Yeah, as with most of the tribes, the government to government relationship is probably one of those core values and important values that each line officer is responsible for. As you talk about any number of projects across the Tongass and the numbers go into the nearly 200 projects ongoing at any one time, each of the line officers tries to meet on whatever schedule they can to try to update the tribes and see what government to government consultation requests or importance, or items are needed. It varies as you move around the landscape on what that takes. In some locations it's a month to month meeting, in some cases it's ad hoc and based on the individual need, and then in some of the more remote locations that are more difficult to get to it takes a little longer and it may not be as concurrent as other locations. But each of the line officers, that is their role, that is their responsibility, and they all seek to do it. And very candidly, it's a host of different individuals, they approach it very differently.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. One more process question. You said the draft environmental impact statement is due out in June and you'll be taking comments on that draft, when -- do you know how long the comment period will be open for that and whether or not our fall cycle meeting will happen before that closes?

MR. STEWART: I may have to stand corrected but I think it's 45 days.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: So.....

MR. STEWART: Now, I should say I should also acknowledge that as the line officer, that date can change, the standard schedule is 45 days but it can change from that. It can be extended based on a line officer determination and need.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: So the draft environmental impact statement comment period would most likely close prior to our next proceedings in the fall?

MR. STEWART: Well, assuming that it comes out at the beginning of July then the comment period would generally go into mid-August would be the easiest way to frame it.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you. I don't have any further questions, and it doesn't sound like there's any further questions from the Council so we appreciate the update.

I'm not sure if you're planning on staying at the table for the next one but I'd like to invite Ms. Nicole Grewe up to the table and the next item on our agenda is an update on the Alaska Roadless Rule.

MS. GREWE: Thank you, Chair Needham and honorable Council members. It's good to be back with you this afternoon. My name is Nicole Grewe, I'm a regional economist.

REPORTER: Nicole, you don't have to hold the button down.

MS. GREWE: Thank you.

(Laughter)

MS. GREWE: That's a lot of coordination, thank you.

(Laughter)

MS. GREWE: My name's Nicole Grewe and I'm a regional economist for the Forest Service for the Alaska region and I'm based out of Juneau, Alaska. I'm also a member of the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking Team, a core member of the inter-disciplinary team that is comprised of myself, several others from the Alaska region and also other colleagues from the Washington office of the Forest Service and I'm here today to provide an update on the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking project and the process.
So I had sort of prepared some remarks here. Last time I was with you, last fall, I did a formal Powerpoint presentation and so today I just generally prepared some overview comments. Since I know we have some new members here I'll just briefly touch on what the project is, talk about the current status of it, next steps. What we're doing in the domain of public engagement. And then open it up for questions and answers from the Council and, in fact, if you have questions along the way, please ask, rather than hold them, if it's a point that you'd like to discuss.

So the Alaska Roadless Rule has been in the media a lot lately as you know. For those that are new I'll just briefly note that the State of Alaska submitted a petition in January of 2018 which started us down this path and they essentially asked for an exemption from the 2001 roadless rule, citing a desire to explore either an exemption or potentially additional alternatives to how we could balance conservation with economic opportunity for the region and that sort of started us on the path of looking at the 2001 Roadless Rule and trying to figure out whether that rule really works for this region, whether there's a better path forward for this region. But August of 2018, the Forest Service signed a memorandum of understanding with the State of Alaska that established them, not only as the petitioner but also now as a cooperating agency, so essentially a partner at the table. After August the team started in earnest on this project with conducting scoping meetings across the region. In total we held 17 public meetings, we held meetings in 14 Southeast communities which is nearly half of all communities in the region. We also conducted a meeting in Anchorage and Washington, D.C., two in Juneau and it was a whirlwind. I think we ended that scoping process with me, I think, here reporting to the RAC, and kind of getting well oriented to what we were doing.

And I'll just say Roadless Rulemaking in a nutshell, the easiest way I can describe what it is is we're looking at the regulation and trying to figure out whether there's a better fit for the Roadless Rule in Alaska. But at its core, it is the reallocation of about 9.3 million acres across the Tongass, it's about 55 percent of the Tongass National Forest. When I've done the public meetings I found the
best way to describe it is it's kind of akin to a
municipal rezone and all of the research and analysis
and public discussion and all those things that we deal
with at the local level, it's the same for the Tongass
National Forest.

Let me see, so we ended our scoping
period last fall. And throughout late fall and into
the winter we developed basically a range of
alternatives and we started down the path of developing
our draft environmental impact statement. And people
have asked, you know, often times asked, so what is
things going to look like on the ground, what does a
new Roadless Rule, what can Alaska Roadless Rule look
like on the ground and I think when I tried to answer
that question months ago, before we'd heard from the
public, before we'd done our scoping meetings, I
answered it real generally but now that we have been
through scoping, we've developed our alternatives, we
have a preliminary draft environmental impact statement
and I'll just note that Roadless Rulemaking for me has
much more concrete -- has a much more concrete meaning
to it. And I'll just say in a nutshell, when you're
trying to draft an Alaska Roadless Rule, there's
essentially three steps, and for the 9.3 -- we
currently have 9.3 million acres of inventoried
roadless areas, there's 110 areas of these areas across
the Tongass National Forest and step one in Roadless
Rulemaking was to ask ourselves, along with our
cooperating agencies and I would be remiss if I didn't
mention that we have more than the State of Alaska at
the table, we have six tribal governments that have
signed on as cooperating agencies so there literally is
the State, six tribal governments and the Forest
Service sitting together as an inter-disciplinary team
and so by the time we closed our scoping meetings and
heard from the public, analyzed all the written
comment, then came the next phase, and what could an
Alaska Roadless Rule look like for the Tongass National
Forest, and step one is trying to reimagine what a
roadless area really means and customize the Tongass
National Forest. And right now we have one category of
land through the current 2001 Roadless Rule and it's
called an inventoried roadless area that has nine
characteristics that we use to describe what these
roadless areas look like on the ground, and these are
generally characteristics that really describe the
physical characteristics of an undisturbed area. So we
had to kind of take that one category of land and
imagine what could this look like for Alaska. Is there
a different type of category. Is there multiple
categories. And in the end we sort of developed
multiple categories of Alaska roadless areas.

And to date the draft environmental
impact statement is not available for public review,
it's internal to the Forest Service and the cooperating
agencies so I'm going to speak to this conceptually
knowing that I have read the letter that the Council
submitted to Forest Supervisor Stewart and Regional
Forester Schmid and the Roadless Rulemaking team so I'm
going to try to kind of put some bounds on this for you
knowing that the draft environmental impact statement,
like I said, it's close to us, it won't be released
until next summer. Eventually the U.S. Department of
Agriculture Secretary makes the decision and he is in
his deliberative process now of reviewing that
preliminary draft environmental impact statement. But
just so I can put a little bit of boundaries around
this for you so you can perhaps imagine what we might
have designed, but we have created multiple categories
of land management within these inventoried roadless
areas, this one category of land, we created multiple
categories and we have applied them differentially
across the alternatives.

We have six alternatives that run the
span of no action alternative, which is the current
2001 Roadless Rule, which keeps 9.3 million acres
approximately as an inventoried roadless area across
110 areas, and on the other end of the spectrum was the
full exemption request by the State of Alaska, which is
essentially exempting the Tongass National Forest from
the Roadless Rule, the current Roadless Rule. We've
had the exemption before, in that case these 9.3
million acres would be managed primarily by the Forest
Plan.

So we've actually imagined, in addition
to those sort of bookends of the continuum four
alternatives that are sorted in between on this
continuum, and on this continuum we've applied multiple
categories of land management. Some categories are
even more conservation focused than the current
National rule. We were trying to be responsive to what
we heard in our scoping meetings and also in the
written comment and stakeholder groups.
So it isn't -- I think when we did our scoping meetings and the last time I was before you, the conversation was really about what's in and what's out. What's going to remain a roadless area, what's not. And I'm telling you it's much more complex than that. When you're trying to design something that is responsive to what you've heard in the public and also responsive to a diversity of interest groups.

So where we are right now is we do have a preliminary draft environmental impact statement. The fine tuning is still happening on it and it will soon be submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for their consideration. They get about three months to consider it. And eventually the Secretary of Agriculture will pick his preferred alternative, that's Secretary Sonny Perdue, and he will pick a preferred alternative. It'll most likely be one of the six. And we will draft our proposed rule around that preferred and it will all go out to the public about mid-summer.

So as a team member, for myself, I'm essentially on hold per USDA review of the preliminary DEIS and the selection of preferred alternative. So during this time where it's gone relatively quiet amongst the team members, we're reengaging in public outreach.

So I think I just noted that we're hoping to be able to publish the draft environmental impact statement with the proposed rule about mid-summer. I say, about, because the USDA, it usually takes about three months to clearance these documents through the Department, in addition there are other projects that are -- there's a multitude of projects, rulemaking projects that are moving its way through the USDA. So I'm sort of noting mid-summer and after that there'll be a 60 day public comment period, another round of public meetings for the draft environmental impact statement. We'll visit the same communities that we did through scoping and we will also be conducting subsistence hearings.

And I think I'll leave it at that Chair Needham because I'm sure the questions will raise other points that I may have missed.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great, thank you, Ms. Grewe, for that update, where we are with the
Alaska Roadless Rule.

At this time are there any comments or questions from Council members.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Nicole. I'd just like to ask Mr. Stewart, have you received and had a chance to look at our letter that we did send you. It didn't get sent until just about a little over a week ago. Have you received that yet and had a chance to look at it?

MR. STEWART: With all due respect, Mr. Hernandez, I only had a chance to peruse it while I was traveling. It's actually been submitted up to the Regional Forester, which is where I would have transmitted it up so that it could get to the team members.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you. So do I understand that this team was able to operate during the shutdown period?

MS. GREWE: Council member Hernandez.

Yes, the Alaska Roadless Rule team did function during -- we were called back to work during the furlough, I would say late in the furlough and limited hours. At that time the contractor was working on the draft environmental impact statement, which doesn't necessarily impact us daily, so on a limited basis.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I just ask that question because you know this letter was just issued March 5th and, of course, we started -- we drafted the letter back in October so, you know, it took a really long time to get to you and it was significantly delayed, you know, by that shutdown period and I know -- I think I had heard that you were, you know, continuing to work through the shutdown so we were a little frustrated through that.

However, I think the Council would like and I'll reference, you know, Section .805 of ANILCA now, that the Council is authorized to, you know, file reports on management strategies and land use planning efforts to the Secretary of the Agriculture, I mean that's how ANILCA is structured, that's one of our
options, I guess, one of our responsibilities. So, you
know, as Chairman of the Council, I think it's within
my obligation here to speak for the Council and say
that we would really like the Secretary to be able to
look at this letter as well. And so Mr. Stewart you're
here with us today, I was wondering if I could ask you
that you could pass this letter through the chain of
command, I know it's already gone to the regional
forester but we would like this letter to eventually
get to the Secretary himself, and can you pledge to do
that for us?

MR. STEWART: So the commitment I can
offer, Mr. Hernandez, is to make sure it gets to the
steering committee, which is the leaders that are
responsible for managing this overall program. At that
point in time it'll be up to the Washington office on
how it crosses the street to the Department of
Agriculture, sir.

MR. HERNANDEZ: So the steering
committee, that includes people from the Washington
office?

MR. STEWART: That's affirmative.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Well, I would make the
request that you urge them to pass that on, if you
could do that I would appreciate it.

MR. STEWART: I will gladly make sure
that the Washington office is aware of the interest
that the Council has on seeing that it gets to the
Secretary, or the Secretary's office.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, appreciate
that.

MR. STEWART: Thank you, sir.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Other questions
and comments from the Council.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you. We've heard
a lot about the three facets that this affects, you
know, the stem exclusion, old growth deer winter
habitat and we have predation on deer, deer don't have
any protections in Unit 2. Everything else seems to, like bear, wolf, but the people subsist on deer, it's the most important species yet it's just kind of blown off.

But we think that the habitat, the winter habitat is jeopardized.

You have over a million acres that have been logged in Unit 2 alone and the Tongass is only 17 million acres big. So it kind of gives you an idea of what's been happening there.

I've lived there for 70 years and I was in Edna Bay when it first started kicking off in like 1956 and '55, and since then it's been logged at an unsustainable rate, even today. So you know those things need to be considered seriously. We don't have the timber base, it's all second growth and nobody wants that. They're determined, as the -- the whole idea of this is to extract the rest of the old growth. We can't do that and still have the geography that we need to subsist on that island. It's really frustrating to me. I watched the whole thing turn from a pristine forest into what you see today and it really is hard to take.

And now I see because of your restricted by the Roadless Rule that you're combing through what you've already logged and leaf strips are going away and things like that, but I do know that you're mandated to supply X amount of timber so in some cases you don't have a choice. But that is not good either. Some of that stuff should have been left for the next 50 years before you choose to log the adjacent timber.

I don't know what your deer modeling, how current those are that you use to produce your new logging sales, how current that is, because a lot of timber is logged since the 1980s, you know, a tremendous amount. In fact, private enterprise has logged more than the Forest Service since that time.

Anyway, these are all concerns.

And I think the winter habitat needs to really have a strong focus. One bad winter we would be in much worse shape than we are now and even with a
relaxed wolf harvest opportunity it's still going to
take years to -- we'll never have balance but a little
closer to balance on wolf/deer populations, it's not
going to happen as easy as Chichagof or somewhere
there's no wolf. So we're looking at some difficult
times for awhile.

And the other question was, there was
no mention of in the Roadless Rule of exempting the LUD
II islands that we have out in front of us. Those have
never been mentioned, are they still protected in the
Roadless. Those are of great concerns because that's
where we really utilize the land. And there's a
section between just north of San Cristo Channel, which
is 11 mile which 20-some years ago we had a big battle
and managed to preserve it because the Forest Service
wanted to put a road through there and connect the
winter harbor road with the Sealaska road closer to
Klawock and we managed to stop that, is that under
threat, too, you know, I mean there's a lot of things
that are concerning about this that affect the way we
live.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. Mr.
Douville. I'll address several of your points here
that I hope will allay some concern.

So with Alaska Roadless Rulemaking we
set out to try to develop an Alaska Roadless Rule that
kept the transition intact and I believe we've done
that.

And then as far as timber harvest, I
would just like to provide a reminder that the Tongass
Timber Reform Act requires the Tongass National Forest
to seek to meet timber demand, and I'm the economist
that develops the annual timber demand figure, and just
because we are developing an Alaska Roadless Rule or
are attempting to, all of that -- all of the timber
demand requirements remain in place. It doesn't
necessarily mean there'll be more timber harvest. When
we first started Alaska Roadless Rulemaking, for me, as
a planner, and a professional, it was a way to offer
the Forest Supervisor greater discretion and how timber
sales are designed to make them more economical but it
wasn't necessarily for greater volume and timber.

And the third point, LUD II,
Congressionally designated areas will -- that's a
Congressional designation, there is nothing about roadless rulemaking that undoes those protections. So LUD II priority -- LUD II areas remain protected. And then when I mentioned this array of different land management categories, there's a category that reaffirms that protection even, which is kind of almost a double layer.

I mean as I noted, you know, when I came here months ago the conversation was more about is an area in or out of a roadless area, what should be protected, what shouldn't and it's much more complex than that. At its core, we can't -- roadless rulemaking, you cannot remove the LUD II designation and in some cases, depending on the alternative, we've added protections.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Follow up, Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Having lived there all my life I'm totally convinced that the Roadless Rule works for me and the way I live. It hasn't stopped anything from happening, I mean any permits that were applied for have gone through like in a timely fashion, it hasn't stopped anything economic other than perhaps logging some -- the rest of the old growth on the island. But it hasn't hindered us, near as I know. So in my opinion it works for us.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Mr. Wright and then Mr. Hernandez.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair. Thanks for being here to hear some of our concerns.

You know, you were saying that -- you said that there were going to be subsistence hearings around Southeast so what I'd like to know is where and when.

And another question is when these subsistence hearings happen and you listen and you get a big concern from a community member or an organization member, will that concern make any change in the plan that the rule that may be happening. Because I've been to testify against for a Senator and I sat there and I watched him and I said, we're testifying in front of you, you haven't written a thing
down, you've listened, is this just a formality because
if you're going to listen to people that are testifying
on behalf of subsistence, will it change any direction
for the people that live in that area.

Thank you.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. So
where the subsistence hearings will happen, I'll have
Deanna circulate a list. This is the list of where we
had the public scoping meetings but these are the same
communities that we will have draft environmental
impact statement -- or, yeah, DEIS public meetings
followed by a subsistence hearing. So there are 14
Southeast communities and we will be doing subsistence
hearings in those communities.

And part two of your question, so when
we do the subsistence hearings I would like to think
that, yes, that people listen to what's being said. I
will tell you that through my own participation through
the scoping meetings, we took what we read in the
written comment and what we heard in the meetings and
we thoroughly deliberated and tried to come up with a
range of alternatives that reflected -- that no matter
how you feel about Roadless Rulemaking, you can see
yourself in an alternative. And people's concerns
around subsistence resources was definitely part of
that conversation. Through scoping we developed key
issue statements, so the three items that were most
concerned about through the analysis and the first was,
you know, basically conservation of roadless
characteristics and the second is socio-economic well-
being and other community variables and the third is
conservation of habitat and biodiversity.

So I can't protect the future but I
will tell you that the inter-disciplinary team has done
the best that they can with a highly controversial ask
that is difficult in this region to make and we've done
the best we can to create a thorough range of
alternatives that it does create a decision space for
the Secretary of Agriculture to make his decision.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you,
Nicole. Do you have a followup, Mr. Wright.
MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I'm just wondering because, you know, people are putting themself forward to testify on subsistence, the reason why they testify is because they don't want what subsistence they have left to go away, you know, because I've seen it.

And I have another question, when the logging starts, is everything based on economics of, you know, the pricing of the logging because I've seen where logs were being hauled out but there was -- the market was so low that nothing was being, you know, there wasn't any profit or anything, and even to keep the operation going. So if there is a market that does not take care of the logging, will that operation stop or will it continue on because the operation is already in full swing. So it's kind of not -- it doesn't make sense to be doing something where you're losing money, it's just common sense. So what keeps it going or what, you know, what keeps it from -- I'm done, thank you.

MR. STEWART: Yeah, if I may, Mr. Wright, through the Chair. There's several topics that you brought up and I was going to try to go through those if I could in order. I need to step back to Mr. Douville's question a little earlier and acknowledge first and foremost that your articulation of the value of subsistence, the importance of deer to the Southeast communities I would say is absolutely correct. It comes through in every meeting and everything that I attend. And then as you transition that to Mr. Wright's comments and the importance of subsistence to the communities and to the comments, I can offer, absolutely, the last decision I made on Prince of Wales there were five actions that I specifically took that were solely based on the comments that came in based on subsistence. Some came in through testimony, some came in through comments. I tried to articulate those earlier. But for instance some of the things are actually having moderating or improving the conditions within five miles of the communities with the actions that we take, taking specific actions to try to improve that area around the communities. Trying to extend the use of the road systems for an additional three to five years for a multitude of reasons, in this case it was identified as fuel wood but it has a lot of implications as it relates to the subsistence needs of the communities and subsistence users have needs too.
On Prince of Wales Landscape Level analysis a couple of other examples are no harv --
limiting harvest above north of the Twenty Road and then also staying out of BCU5280.

So there specific examples in a real life situation of a recent decision that directly ties to that.

So the testimony in those hearings is not only critical, I think it's necessary. I think it's actually a higher value for me. Often the comments and testimony that come in may not have direct relevance to the topic at hand and so it can bring in other items. I don't have any specific examples on those, but I try to take those into consideration even on other decisions or following up on those decisions.

When you get to the logging cost and the logging markets and the timing of those, most timber sales have multiple years that they can work and operate in. Sometimes they choose to operate early in the contract on logging, sometimes they defer that out for a year or two or three, whatever time period they have because the business side of it is the side for them is about making the monetary value work out. And sometimes they specifically choose when they're going to put something on the market, when they're going to harvest a specific unit or when they're going to seek certain composition of species or size based on what the business interests are at that given time. So, yes, it does make an absolute difference on when they harvest and where they harvest.

And with that I yield back.

Oh, and I do apologize, one other question, if I could followup. Mr. Douville, I think you asked about Eleven Mile Road, I'll apologize, sir, I don't know that location but I'd be glad to get back to you later.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. It was Mr. Hernandez' turn next.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Ms. Needham. Just as a followup to what Mr. Wright brought up there about the subsistence hearings, I think the Council just kind of needs to be assured that, you
know, these subsistence hearings would be held in accordance with, you know, what is stated in Section .810 of ANILCA, that these hearings would be required to prepare an environmental impact statement -- I'll read it here.

If the Secretary is required to prepare an environmental impact statement, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, he shall provide notice and hearing and include findings required by Subsection as part of an environmental impact statement. Is that -- do you plan on following all those stipulations that are laid out in Section .810 of ANILCA in regard to subsistence hearings or are you doing subsistence hearings just merely as an information gathering for some other purpose?

MS. GREWE: So we've had a lot of discussion about this exact point in the office with consult with Office of General Counsel, attorneys and such, and we are having subsistence hearings. In the draft environmental impact statement there is a section on subsistence that discusses access, competition, abundance, distribution, but a determination per the Agency's position an ANILCA .810 determination and the findings is not required because this is a programmatic decision and there is a clause in that ANILCA section you just cited about the withdraw, lease or otherwise occupancy of land. And I'll just say with the original 2001 Roadless Rule, that there was no ANILCA determination when that Roadless Rule was first promulgated. Anyway, I think it's -- that is what you are likely to see, is input into the DEIS, information gathering through subsistence hearings, further analysis through the draft environmental impact statement but potentially not the findings just as you stated, Council member Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I guess I was anticipating that might be the answer. We might dispute that finding. But I don't know, I guess the Council would have to consider that, we may have to draft a letter or something to that effect of how we view the requirements under ANILCA but I do appreciate your answer. Thank you for clarifying that because it may have been misconstrued when you say that you're going to hold subsistence hearings. Exactly how those subsistence hearings are used in the determination, I think is the crux of the matter here.
So we may not agree with that but we will take it under advisement, so thank you for that clarification.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez.

Dr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Gee, I get to be Dr. Schroeder, that's pretty wonderful.

(Laughter)

MR. SCHROEDER: Just a question for Nicole, if you could just explicate the logic about how this is a rulemaking and not a land use action because most people would believe that if the Forest Service goes to great expense and has major public involvement that this would seem to most people to be a land use action. And I understand you discussed this, but if you could put on the record the logic behind why Section .810 hearings apparently are not being held because Section .810 hearings, as Chairman Hernandez mentioned, do hang on whether or not there's a significant restriction to subsistence uses. So if you could do that and I'll probably have a follow up or two.

Thank you.

MS. GREWE: Okay, let me see if I can cover the ground here.

So this is a rulemaking process. We're developing a new regulation. It's also referred to as programmatic. We're looking at the reallocation of land. We're not approving projects on the ground. There will still be analysis when roads need to be built, timber harvest is proposed. There will still be analysis. It doesn't change any of that.

And it is the position of the Agency, through the attorneys that have been doing this work and advising us, that an ANILCA .810 evaluation and findings is not required precisely because this is rulemaking and programmatic. And then if you push them further, which I did yesterday, it's really about that one clause that speaks to the withdraw, lease or
otherwise change in occupancy of the land, and each one
of those words has a precise meaning in statute. And
it just -- Roadless Rulemaking doesn't fit any of those
words as they are defined. And in addition there is a
historical record here that when the original Roadless
Rule was promulgated, it's in the record in 2000, it's
like in the response to comments to the DEIS where they
further discuss why an ANILCA .810 finding is not
required. And I am glad to share that with you through
Deanna, it's part of the project record. And I will
note that this is not something new to the Tongass
National Forest, I was just reviewing the 2016 Forest
Plan Amendment Record of Decision, and there is some
discussion in there regarding an ANILCA determination,
and I will say that in the spirit of how we like to
manage the Tongass National Forest in the Alaska
region, that there has always been a norm that while
programmatic decisions don't require ANILCA, a thorough
-- it doesn't necessarily require an ANILCA ,810
finding, that in the spirit of how we manage the lands
up here that we still carry out subsistence hearings to
information gather, and a lot of that is still
discussed in the draft environmental impact statement.
And I anticipate that that practice is going to be
carried forward through Alaska Roadless Rulemaking. I
also think that you are an established FACA and if you
aren't happy with that, you can communicate through
your channels as well.

So I think it's where we're at today.

And I'm looking forward to the
subsistence hearings next summer. What I tell you
today is the best knowledge I have as a team member
today, it could be different in three months, I don't
know, but that is generally how we're proceeding.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Followup.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yeah, thanks very much
for putting that on the record. And we'll note that
Section .810 has been, at different times, and managed
since the passage of ANILCA has provided a very
important protection for subsistence uses on Federal
public land throughout the state.

Will also note that it has been very
heavily litigated earlier on in various controversies
over timber harvest in Southeast Alaska. So to really be up to date on exactly what those legal decisions -- how those legal decisions formed, the current approach to Section .810, is pretty complicated. So complicated, meaning that your lawyers are going to be against their lawyers, whoever you are, is kind of the way that goes.

On the part of the Council, we take our responsibilities to protect subsistence really seriously, that's why we're here and spending a full week of our lives, this week, and really much of this day on Forest Service planning because it really is an important factor. I believe when we get into further discussion, that this Council will certainly contest this interpretation of rulemakings and regulations not requiring a Section .810 findings and the findings are whether or not an action has a significant impact on subsistence uses. And given the litigation, which I'm not current on the litigation right now, but those terms also have been masticated at great length and refined and redefined and at one time it was a significant possibility of a significant impact on subsistence so you tell me what that means. Try to explain that. You have to look in the mirror a few times to be able to do that with a straight face, let's be honest about it.

But it's my personal opinion, and I don't know how other Council members feel, that a full .810 analysis needs to be done along with that finding. Now the finding of a significant impact to subsistence uses doesn't mean that an action can't proceed, but there needs to be a further finding that that action is necessary and so that also has a whole set of considerations involved in determining what is necessary.

However, the straight face test is a little bit hard to take on this because, you know, it pushed to the extreme anything short of anything that doesn't involve a running chainsaw or a D9 Cat may not be a land use action, you know, if you define it in a certain way, that unless you can see trees becoming horizontal, or roads being built, well, maybe we can figure out some logic that just isn't a land use action, that's just a plan, that's just a piece of paper, that's just an idea, that's just a rule, that's just a regulation. You know, you're going to need a
big mirror to practice that one in front of to have that be a conclusive.

So perhaps I'd suggest when we're done hearing from Forest Service we may consider voicing our concern about the .810 -- the subsistence hearings which are -- most people would think they were .810 hearings because that's what .810 hearings and subsistence hearings held in the region over so many decades now, almost been -- I don't think the public differentiates those two terms.

I have a couple of other things.

I think what we've been hearing from subsistence users for a long time is really people are concerned about cumulative effects. So on the one hand there could be a little bit of nimby involved there and, you know, not in my backyard sort of thing, but boy what I'm hearing is that people are saying, listen we've had an awful lot of resource degradation in our region, and in the areas that we use for subsistence and frankly we can't take enough. We've heard suggestions in a lot of different -- quite a few different communities that subsistence needs may not be met for certain species, we really haven't addressed directly or have gotten too much testimony on whether subsistence needs, overall, meaning the whole basket of things that people harvest as their -- in my conversations with Albert Howard, he was talking about how a strength of subsistence was substituting in when you couldn't get A, you got B, and if you couldn't get A and B, you had C. What I'm hearing is that quite a few people feel that that substitution of maintaining a subsistence lifestyle and having a full food basket of subsistence foods is just getting really tough to do.

So something else that the Council will be very interested in looking at is how this Roadless Rule deals with these cumulative effects because we simply aren't starting with the natural state of the Tongass, particularly on Prince of Wales, but that would also hold true for the other areas that have seen large scale resource use extraction over the past 30 years.

A second thing that I'm very concerned about is I'm not clear whether the Roadless Rule takes into account -- oh, let's back up. Any plan that's
forward looking that is going out five or 10 or 15 or
20 years needs to consider the foreseeable events that
are coming our way. That's the basis of planning. I
think the evidence is extremely strong that we're in a
situation of climate emergency. We've heard a good
deal about the climate emergency as it affects
individual communities who have seen streams going dry,
of hurting salmon returns, who have been very concerned
about unusual ecological events that have taken place
in the past year. At our last Council meeting we noted
how the sunny weather was really great but after you
got your tan for a couple of days you got worried about
the Forest completely drying out. So I believe that
climate change is a foreseeable impact that needs to be
fully accounted for in this plan.

And let me see if I had something else
here.

Perhaps I'll leave it at that and with
-- just saying it again so I remember, that I think we
should weigh in as a Council on the Section .810 issue.

Thank you.

So I guess I did have a couple of
questions for you there which had to do with cumulative
effects and -- oh, I didn't talk about another wealth,
that's our Tongass National Forest, which also Mr.
Howard mentioned earlier, and how Angoon is managing
some of its timber lands, is that, these timber lands
are extremely valuable as sources of carbon
sequestration. And interestingly enough something that
perhaps the plan may wish to consider, is this value,
now this is kind of a peculiar argument because anyone
who's concerned about the climate emergency would say
that sequestering carbon is a pretty good thing.
That's what we want to do, we got too much carbon
dioxide floating around and short of all of us stopping
breathing, we can't do much as individuals to keep from
exhaling more and more carbon. But here we have this
wonderful Forest that is just really good, it's soaking
up carbon. Well, because of the carbon credit program
which Sealaska and apparently Angoon have engaged in,
gosh, we now have a value on carbon sequestration. We
didn't have that before. We'd simply say, well, it's a
good thing to hold carbon in the Forest, but how can we
put an economic value on that, it's more like I like
trees vertical. But, oh, low and behold, now we have
economics around that. And I'd suggest that a major 
Forest Service plan, which I believe is a land use 
action, needs to include that economic analysis of the 
value of the Tongass National Forest in its different 
succesional stages of its carbon sequestration.

So those are just a few things, thank 
you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. 
Schroeder. I'm going to want to give us a quick break 
here soon but I want to gauge the Council, I'm 
wondering if we can ask questions and then deliberate 
on what we want to do to kind of move along efficiently 
with this topic, and so before we actually break, are 
there any specific questions that Council members might 
have for Ms. Grewe and Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Thank you, Madame Chair. My 
name is Larry Bemis, I'm from Yakutat. And my question 
is, on this Roadless Rule proposal, that most of the 
timber that has been harvested both commercially -- no, 
Forest Service lease, airport State right-of-way, 
aircraft lease, the Native organization with their 50- 
some million board feet, now if this rule goes into 
effect and access to these -- the roads are all 
overgrown so you're going to have to renew them, and my 
question is, none of this timber has been thinned. We 
are dealing with a choking second growth timber stand. 
And I don't know if the local corporation is going to 
try to do anything, I don't know if the Forest Service 
is going to do anything with theirs, and I'm already 
seeing that the cutting of the right-of-way of the 
trees for the approach that -- I'm not sure if the 
State and the Forest Service worked on that, but as 
you're approaching into Yakutat, they thinned out quite 
a bit of area and it won't be a matter of time before 
that has to be redone, so my question is how do you get 
the people that are responsible for managing their own 
land to take care of it before some of these avenues of 
having access without creating new roads, I mean maybe 
before something like this goes into effect, that they 
get notice, you know, that you're not going to be able 
to do this if you don't get on it or apply now and say 
you are going to do it.

In other words, everybody that's used
the land that is not thinning the proper Forest, that they be put on notice.

Thank you.

MR. STEWART: Should I respond, Madame Chair?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Yes, please, Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: Okay. Is it Mr. Bemis, I understand.

MR. BEMIS: Yes.

MR. STEWART: I didn't want to mispronounce it. But I am assuming this is associated with Yakutat.

MR. BEMIS: Right.

MR. STEWART: And some actions up there.

MR. BEMIS: Well, if you can in any way.....

MR. STEWART: Yeah. I was going to have to step it up to a broader scale, I don't know the specifics on Yakutat, I know there is some ongoing work up there but I couldn't get to that detail.

What we have found is that we need to be thinning about 9,000 acres a year just to get caught up. We're struggling to find contractors to even do our current target, which is 4,500, which is half of the needed or necessary level of thinning of these second growth stands. And at this point in time we have not found contractors that are available or interested in doing the level of work. It is exceedingly difficult work, challenging work, in very remote situations and often in very difficult camp situations. We've tried to build those skill sets locally and not been able to do that and we've had to contract out of Alaska to bring that capability to even do thinning which has still got us under 50 percent of our target.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard, you had a question.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I've been trying to keep everything I say as short as possible to allow everyone else.

I share the same concerns with Section .810. I appreciate Mr. Schroeder over there because he challenges me to read this over and over again and now that I understand it, I'm trying to understand the reason why it isn't being used, and the only thing I can come up with is it isn't used as a part of this process on the Roadless Rule what it should be used for is when they decide to build the roads. But at the end of the day when I read this, it's law, and I don't understand why an Agency doesn't have to abide this law that's on the books. So I need help understanding and wrapping my mind around it so one day I'll grow up to be like Mr. Schroeder.

(Laughter)

MR. HOWARD: So thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Ms. Grewe.

MS. GREWE: Thank you. Mr. Howard, through the Chair. Yeah, I'll just say what I have read and the discussions I've been part of it's really three-fold.

I mean we can disagree about whether an ANILCA .810 finding is needed but the Agency position to date has been about the original language in ANILCA, Section .810, which states, and I just had to find that language here, in determining a withdraw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit the use of occupancy, or disposition of public lands under any provision of law authorizing such actions, the head of the Federal agency and it goes on and on, but it's really about withdraw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit.

Those four key words.

That the Agency interpretation on that is that Roadless Rulemaking is not the withdrawal, reservation, leasing or otherwise permitting of land. Now, that's sort of a literal interpretation of those
lines and I would encourage you to go to the definitions section of ANILCA where it describes withdraw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit and once you read those definitions it's kind of like a square peg down a round hole. You can disagree. I totally understand that. I have a lifetime of rural affairs work so I get it.

Number 2, Roadless Rulemaking is a programmatic decision. It's the making of regulation. It's rulemaking. And at that level we're really not authorizing projects on the ground.

And then the third rationale is just the history that we have here with the 2001 Roadless Rule, there's a planning record around whether Roadless Rulemaking is the withdrawal, reservation, leasing or otherwise permitting of land and it was agreed to back in 2001 that it was not and then whenever any programmatic decision's been made on the Tongass we've generally carried forward with that.

But, yes, we're going to have subsistence hearings. We can split hairs about whether we call them ANILCA .810 subsistence hearings or subsistence hearings. As a team member I am happy that we are doing DEIS meetings and we are still doing subsistence hearings with a transcriber to take information for information gathering purposes and we will see what happens from there because this is a controversial topic and this is a controversial project.

So I don't know if that helps you, Mr. Howard, I'd be happy to kind of go over more of the language and such but I just think sometimes people agree to disagree.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I'm going to ask that we take a quick break, we've been -- is it just a quick follow up.

Thanks.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. I replaced a person that told me every word matters and you have to find the definition of it so when you're going after Roadless Rule, in my mind the people that wanted to reverse that decision or trying to create a
reserve, so to speak, so if you think about it in that context, they want to say well we no longer want the Federal government to tell us what to do on our land, that's creating a reserve, which means Section .810 applies. I agree with the Chairman of the Board that our consideration and our concerns should be addressed through the process.

So every day I have Mr. Kookesh in my head saying you got to do something, you got to say something, read this, so I'm looking at my phone and reading Section .810 and reserve is you're concerned with that 9 million acres that's affected by putting the Roadless Rule in place and by wanting to open that again, Madame Chair, I believe they're trying to create a reserve and show the Federal government that not in our backyard. So, yeah, I'd like to join that conversation when it happens.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard. With that we are going to take a 10 minute break. If we can be back at the table at 2:25, I'd like to ask the Council to be ready to finish up our questions that we have so that we have plenty of time to have a deliberation in terms of what we're going to do next and how we'd respond to the Alaska Roadless Rule. So 2:25, thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, we'll come back. Are there any Council members that have questions for Ms. Grewe or Mr. Stewart regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule. This is the time to kind of get clarifications and the additional information that we need so that we can deliberate and decide how this Council would like to move forward.

Mr. Wright.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair. I see you gave a list here but will dates be coming out on when you're going to be having meetings in these areas so -- I'm a fisherman so I got to make sure that I'm around.
Thank you.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. Thank you, Mr. Wright. Chair Needham reminded me to speak about the schedule before I'm done here. But, you know, we're hoping to have these meetings about mid-summer. And that -- and July, and I understand concerns around that and with our activities of harvest and other summer happenings here in Southeast. But I think I'll know more in about a month and I can communicate with Deanna, but, you know, from here the DEIS gets submitted to the USDA, they're allowed three months to take a look at it. They could be slower, they could be faster. But theoretically we're looking at hearings in July.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Ms. Grewe. Other questions.

Mr. Winrod.

MR. WINROD: Yes, thank you, Ms. Needham.

Ms. Grewe, just a comment about public information gathering. Just over our recent -- I'm from Klawock, and over our recent wolf issues the State had their meetings down there and I feel like in that process the first meeting there was maybe 200 local people that showed up to comment and the last meetings there was only maybe two or three or four, and I feel like the reason for that would be because people felt like they came for the meetings and there was no change because of their comments and that everything was done the same as it would have been had they not come to comment at all.

And also I feel it's really important, for one, you have to be patient with people because sometimes they're really frustrated and they have things that it affects their life and you have to be patient with their frustration because it's their life that's affected so you have to also be patient with some things like that. But sometimes I understand being in a new position it's stuff that you just have to put up with, it's hard. But also in the outcome people want to see that their input has effect on that,
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1 and if that doesn't happen it seems like you get a rift
2 between management and the people.
3
4 So just as a caution, I've seen that
5 frustration in a lot of people around the community.
6 So I just wanted to say something on that.
7
8 Thank you.
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10 ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Winn.
11
12 Mr. Hernandez.
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14 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, just one more
15 quick question. Something you brought up that kind of
16 struck me there in relation to analyzing, you know, the
17 analysis on whether the Roadless Rule, you said that
18 you're the economist and you analyze the market demand.
19
20 Mr. Howard had kind of brought up a
21 topic there on carbon credits and I was just wondering
22 as part of your market demand analysis, do you consider
23 carbon credits as part of the market?
24
25 MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. We have
26 not done so to date. And, yeah, you know, the
27 economics work behind timber market demand it's really
28 two-fold, I'll say it's Pacific Northwest Research
29 Station, the very sophisticated timber economists that
30 are located down in Portland and then I take their
31 information and calculate the annual timber demand
32 number which informs Supervisor Stewart's decision on
33 timber projects potentially or not. But to date we
34 have not taken carbon credits into account and I've
35 actually called my colleagues down in Portland talking
36 about that, like how are we going to do this, it's
37 nothing that is going to happen immediately. I mean
38 usually we take a really close look at timber market
39 demand on the Tongass National Forest during planning
40 cycles so when we revise or amend the Forest Plan it
41 usually instigates another long-term timber demand
42 report as written by Pacific Northwest Research
43 Station, and I suspect that's when we'll take it up
44 again.
45
46 So the last time that that really --
47 it's considered highly influential science in Federal
48 land management terms, meaning that they complete that
project outside any influence of industry or even Tongass National Forest Staff, or Regional Office Staff, like myself, but I suspect the next time that we take up a Forest Plan, revision or amendment, there will likely be discussion around carbon credits, especially now with Sealaska out in front on carbon sequestration of many acres of their land.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Hopefully we'll be referring to this as Forest market demand in the future instead of timber market demand, so I look forward to that.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just very quickly. We went through earlier in our meeting, we reviewed our Federal Advisory Committee Act charter, which authorizes us to do certain things and it's certainly -- basically we can't do things that are outside our charter. And, specifically FACA is there so that we can advise the Federal government, the Office of Subsistence Management, on subsistence management and regulations and other things related to subsistence.

While we haven't seen the alternatives, either the ones prepared by the Governor's group or the ones that have been submitted, we wonder whether this was an inappropriate advising of the Federal government and that the rules are pretty strict saying how groups may advise the Federal government, and so this would be a continuing matter of concern for us and probably in our comments.

Nicole, if you have anything to say on that, that would be useful but we don't have to beat on it for a long time.

Thank you.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. Quick question, so are you referring -- I'm a little bit confused, are you referring to the State of Alaska's Citizen's Advisory Committee and their potential input into this process or.....
MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, that's correct.

And that an advisory -- we are an advisory committee, we're a FACA committee, and to -- in my understanding to advise the Federal government on regulations you need to be a FACA committee and I don't believe the citizen advisory committee is such a thing. And that includes rather strict rules and that we are under FACA, Deanna's a Federal designated official, and she has certain responsibilities to making sure that we stay within our charter and this clearly didn't apply to the Governor -- I keep referring to it as the Governor's Advisory Group, excuse me.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. So I do have a response to that. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Forest Service and the State of Alaska in August of 2018, and in that memorandum of understanding, it's a relatively short document, but there was one provision in it that the State of Alaska compile some sort of citizen's -- some sort of citizen's advisory committee, council, some sort of group to inform the State of Alaska's input on Alaska Roadless Rulemaking, and Governor Walker, through Administrative Order 299 appointed the State of Alaska Citizen Advisory Committee comprised of 12 members plus one Forest Service information provider, essentially an ex officio member. So that group is not a FACA, it did not necessarily directly advise this development of six alternatives. That group was established by the State of Alaska for State of Alaska purposes. They advise the Governor. And it was through that Governor and -- well, I'll just back up for a moment, that group advises the State of Alaska, the State of Alaska has its own Tongass -- Tongass Team, is what they call it, composed of Department Commissioners, those commissioners advise the Governor. So that group didn't work directly with the Forest Service. They developed their idea of what an Alaska Roadless Rule could look like, multiple options. It got run through the State of Alaska. The State of Alaska is technically the cooperating agency on Alaska Roadless Rulemaking. And the State of Alaska forwarded what the State of Alaska wanted to forward as their input.

And, yes, so the Governor's group, as you called it, Bob, it was formed to advise the Governor and his appointees.

Thank you.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Followup, Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just very quickly, thanks much for the information and perhaps I'll get the lingo down right sometime. But I believe our Council may still have concerns in this area.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Other questions from the Council.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. So what did the Governor's committee, council, whatever, what did they decide was their alternative they thought was best for Alaska?

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. Thank you, Mr. Howard. So I was actually the Forest Service ex officio member on that committee so I had to attend their meetings and provide information, and I will tell you that they drafted a report, they didn't -- in the end they couldn't come to an agreement on one alternative or one option, they sent the Governor a buffet of options that -- including a no action option. They called them options, not alternatives. And in the end they decided not to hold any votes on much of the substance of their work because they didn't feel the need to come to a majority decision, and I think there was diversity on that committee and they just decided to send a buffet of options to the Governor.

So with that said, their report is on line. The Governor still crafted his own letter through the Department of Natural Resources of what the State of Alaska thought was most appropriate for this Alaska Roadless Rulemaking project.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you for that. Any other questions from the Council.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. I have a question, so I believe we are going to be discussing whether or not we want to have a Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting over the summer months in order -- after the Alaska Roadless
Rule draft EIS is released so that we have an
opportunity to look at and comment on the alternatives
that will be in that document and I understand that
there are subsistence hearings that you said would be
in July. Do you expect them to be completed in July, I
mean we're going to pick a timeframe where we can
establish a quorum in a very busy time for all of us as
well as have time to actually formulate those comments
and send them in by the end of the comment period for
the Draft EIS, so I'm just trying to get in my mind if
that lines up at all with whatever information may come
out of those subsistence hearings that you're having --
or planning.

MS. GREWE: So if we remain on schedule
as I know it today, it is likely that we will be
conducting subsistence hearings the second and third
week of July or the third and fourth, most likely
during July. So when you see the draft environmental
impact statement published, the 60 day comment period
follows directly behind and we've tentatively agreed to
allow about a one week, one and a half week kind of
period for the public to download and digest a little
bit, but to start in with our public meetings very
quickly and the subsistence hearings to allow people to
really digest a complex project and get their comments
in within 60 days. So, yeah, July. But like I said
it's really contingent upon the USDA and I think the
best I can do is keep Deanna informed of how our
timeline progresses from here and the USDA could come
in early, they could come in late with their preferred,
but, July, which leaves August for formulating your
comments and getting them to us probably a little bit
after Labor Day.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay, thank you.
And just to clarify we have to make that decision of
when we're going to meet at this meeting.

So, Mr. Kitka, you had a question.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair.
Just a question on the subsistence hearings. What is
the length or the duration of the meetings in each
community? Sometimes it might take a couple days or
maybe even three to really hear everybody.

MS. GREWE: Thank you, Mr. Kitka.
Through the Chair. So I wasn't part of the subsistence
hearings for the Forest Plan Amendment, and so I'm not quite sure how long they took in each community but to the best of my knowledge we were going to close out our public open house and then conduct the subsistence hearing that evening in the community. I don't believe it'll be a multi-day effort in every one of those communities.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Would the information that comes from the subsistence hearings be available immediately afterwards, is that something that you would be able to share back with this Council if the timing works out for us?

MS. GREWE: So we're going to have a transcriber at these hearings and as soon as that information is available it -- you know, we could expedite it and get it out to you. I'm trying, as I'm talking, thinking about the summer schedule and your public notice requirements -- yeah.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: That face didn't look like a commitment.

(Laughter)

MS. GREWE: Well, no, you'd definitely have access, I mean as soon as we can get the transcriptions we can circulate them back to this Council and you can review what was said. I anticipate with 14 meetings in 14 Southeast communities, the meetings alone will take two weeks. I'm hopeful that the transcripts can be produced as we go and I don't know if you prefer to receive them all in one package or piecemeal, but there are certain ways that we could expedite this for you. And you're also welcome to attend the hearings.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Are there any other questions.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. The question when you do the hearings, is the executive order to consult tribes still in place and does it apply to this?

MS. GREWE: So I did sort of blush
through this but, yes, we are doing government to
government tribal consultations all the way throughout
this. My calendar has become quite busy with
consultations lately. We have the government to
government with all the tribes at any time, per their
discretion. We also have six tribes that have signed
on as cooperating agencies in this and we're meeting
with them as cooperators and sometimes leader to leader
through government to government. But, yes, we're
fulfilling that.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. If
there's no other questions I would ask that maybe you
stay where you guys are now in case they come up in the
process of our discussion while we're trying to figure
out how we're going to proceed next, please.

Mr. Stewart.

MR. STEWART: I recognize you need to
break and go on to other things, I just wanted to close
out on my side and I'll certainly remain here. I
wanted to honor and respect Ranger Gunn and Nicole
Grewe here next to me for their engagement today. I
think from a Forest Service standpoint we've had about
a dozen people represented in the last several days to
this. I think it displays the commitment that the
Agency has in trying to do this and that we want to
honor your attendance in Wrangell by making that
presentation and everything. Every meeting that I've
gone to I've been -- I continue to be amazed and
impressed with the respect and the engagement that we
get. I don't want that to diminish the value that we
offer in trying to help work through these things but I
wanted to respect each of you'all for the way that you
engage with Forest Service employees. You demonstrate
a commitment to the resources and to the publics and I
think that the bottom line is, that's one of our core
responsibilities as Federal land managers. As we work
through this, we continue to value any time that we
have with you and we'll continue to commit our time and
our energy to try to assist in whatever capacity we can
and with that, our serious commitment from the Tongass
and from the Region 20, Alaska Region is to continue to
engage with the Southeast Subsistence RAC in whatever
capacity is needed or necessary.
Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you.

At this time I'd like to ask what the wish of the Council is.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Maybe I can lead that with some directed questions.

Well, I thought I was going to be able to and then I had a brain fart.

I was actually going to ask whether or not we can get a representative from OSM up to the table, I have a couple of questions that pertain to basically our ability to proceed.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Doolittle for coming forward.

MR. DOOLITTLE: Sure.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: One question I have is as a matter of how our correspondence works, and I think I know the answer to this, but I'm hoping that you'll be able to state it on the record for us. Mr. Hernandez had asked Mr. Stewart specifically whether or not he would be able to assure that the letter and comments that we wrote regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule, whether or not Mr. Stewart would be able to forward that directly to the Secretary, and we heard that he would definitely push it to the next level of the system within, I didn't necessarily feel that there was confidence that the Secretary would get that in hand, and so I wanted to confirm with you that we can simultaneously ask the Federal Subsistence Board to take our letter and forward it directly to the -- whether or not we can ask them, the Board, the Federal Subsistence Board to get that correspondence directly to the Secretary?

MR. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madame Chair. I would recommend going through the due process
of having the Regional Advisory Council address and

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way to do it is if the RAC member that's in a community
that has a hearing can represent the Council, I think
we can make that decision here, but I'm more concerned
about the six communities that may have subsistence
hearings that we don't have a RAC member sitting at the
table that would be able to bring that back to us. So
do you feel there would be resources we'd be able to
access in order to get a RAC member to those other
communities to hear what the non-represented
communities have to say with respect to the Alaska
Roadless Rule?

MR. DOOLITTLE: I'm going to give you a
bureaucratic answer to that is that I'll get back to
you on that. But I would like to be able to support
that but I will get back to you relative to, you know,
our upcoming budgets. We haven't realized our budget
yet by line item so I'd really like to take a look at
that before I would commit to those resources.

Thanks.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank
you, Mr. Doolittle.

Back to my question, what's the wish of
the Council.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Madame Chair. My
preference would be that we had a face to face meeting
where we could comment on the actual plan as signed off
and delivered. Since we're not able to do that, I
think it would be really useful for us to spend a
little time at this meeting and to draft a letter
including the concerns that we've raised on the record
here and that's one item.

The second item is I'd suggest that we
designate a subcommittee, that our DFO authorizes a
subcommittee to prepare comments on the document once
it's available. And the reason for that is that
everybody will be hithering on in Southeast Alaska and
a subcommittee would be able to prepare draft comments,
which we would then be able to vote on when we have a
teleconference meeting whenever that might be.

I'm just trying to figure out how to
get it through so that we really represent the views of
everybody here.

But there could be -- we're, no-doubt,
going to have some other things to say once we actually
see the document beyond what we've gotten in these
briefings.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Schroeder.

So two items.

One, drafting a letter that
incorporates the comments that we have here to forward
on to the Alaska Roadless Rule.

And, second, to have a subcommittee,
which I think actually really makes sense and thank you
for bringing that forward.

Are we ready to start making a decision
on that now?

(Council nods affirmatively)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. I
guess the first thing I will do is ask for volunteers
to be on the subcommittee for following this Alaska
Roadless Rule issue prior to our -- the potential that
we're going to have a summer meeting so that we can
have directed information that is bringing back to the
Council as whole for our meeting. So who would like to
participate in that subcommittee?

MR. HERNANDEZ: I will.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez.

Mr. Schroeder. I see finger pointing but not hand
raising.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Just an idea, is there going to be the ability to call
into these meetings? Madame Chair, I'm asking for --
I'm definitely going to make time to attend the Angoon
meeting, and I'm not going to be there to speak on
behalf of the RAC, I'll just take notes and inform what
the outcome is, but I can guarantee you there'll be
conversations about .810 at that meeting because
there's people there that know that as well as Mr.
Schroeder does. And if he's going to volunteer me for
anything he's going to have to know I can volunteer him
for something as well.

(Laughter)

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Howard. I think the question is whether or not the
subsistence hearing meetings will have the ability for
people to call in to?

MS. GREWE: I don't think we generally
have the practice of opening up phone lines at our DEIS
meetings and subsistence hearings but I can bring that
idea back to our team. And is that a recommendation
from you, Mr. Howard.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

I think in this instance in order for a RAC member to
attend and considering the funding situation, it may be
-- even if you just opened one line for one RAC member
to listen to.

Also, Madame Chair, another idea and I
joke about this, but it's not that funny, my first term
as Mayor, I wasn't there so they appointed me because I
was gone, it's kind of the drawing straws without me,
so I'd like to see Patricia Phillips at this, she's an
excellent RAC member.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I think the
subcommittee can certainly reach out to Ms. Phillips to
see if she would like to volunteer her time to be on
that. So right now, I was unclear, Mr. Howard, you are
accepting to be on the subcommittee.
MR. HOWARD: That's a definite no, Madame Chair, unless you absolutely need me to be. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you for that clarification. So I have Mr. Schroeder, Mr. Hernandez, we'll reach out to Ms. Phillips, anybody else.

MR. DOUVILLE: I can help.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Douville.

All right, it looks like we have our subcommittee. Does that need to be a vote.

MR. HERNANDEZ: To form a subcommittee?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Normally we don't for having our subcommittees.

MS. PERRY: I'll need to get some clarification between a subcommittee versus a council meeting according to our.....

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, Ms. Perry, you have something that you'd like to ask back of us?

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madame Chair. I would like to reach out to some folks at OSM to get some clarification on a subcommittee. Looking at our Federal Register, the wording says, occasionally a Council will lack information necessary during a scheduled meeting to make a recommendation to the Board or to provide comments on other matters affecting subsistence in their region, if this situation occurs, the Council may announce on the record a later teleconference to address the specific issues when the requested information or data is available, and then it goes on to talk about the teleconferences are open to the public.

I need to consult with OSM regarding if a subcommittee can do that in lieu of a full Council meeting.
Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Just before, Mr. Hernandez, you had a clarification.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, at this point we're not proposing that the subcommittee do the work of the Council, only to formulate some ideas that the Council could act on with a full quorum.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

MR. SCHROEDER: Can I ask something.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes. Deanna, just because I think this is a really important issue for the Council, we've had informal subcommittees that have met at other times to review drafts and things like that. Just because this is a very important issue I wanted to -- I'm suggesting that we formally have a subcommittee. But just as Don said, the subcommittee would simply reporting back to the Board in our teleconference meeting.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you to those that volunteered to do so.

Another item that Mr. Schroeder brought forward was to have a letter from this Council that represents the discussion that we had on the Alaska Roadless Rule here today drafted. So I think in order to have that drafted and sent forward we will need a vote on that so if someone would like to make a motion.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Ms. Needham. I would make the motion that the Council would draft a letter to the Board. That letter would have two items, would request that the Board forward our previous letter from the Council to the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester, that the Board forward that letter on to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior as soon as possible.

And second item in that letter would be that we would want to inform the Board that the Council
does request that a Title .810 finding be made in
relation to the Roadless Rule, and get the Board's
opinion on that.

MR. HOWARD: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right it's
been moved and seconded that we develop a letter to the
Federal Subsistence Board that covers two points.

Number 1 being -- requesting them to
forward.....

REPORTER: Who seconded that motion?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I'm sorry?

REPORTER: Who seconded it?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Sorry, Mr.
Howard seconded that.

REPORTER: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Two points. One,
to forward our previous written letter on to the
Secretary of Interior, and the second to advise the
Board about our concern and request for having a
Section .810 determination made within the EIS for the
Alaska Roadless Rule.

Discussion.

Discussion on this letter that we are
going to write -- Mr. Yeager, you look confused.

MR. YEAGER: That's my thinking look.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great.

Discussion.

MR. KITKA: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Question's been
called. All in favor signify by saying aye.
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IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed say

nay.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right,

motion carries.

Mr. Ream, did you have something for

us?

MR. REAM: Thank you. I just wanted to
maybe add some information that I have, some of the
other Councils that I work with, that might be able to
help Deanna. It is my understanding that you can form
a working group that meets off the record without
giving due notice but that working group cannot take
any action. All of their work has to come back to the
Council for a vote. It's only the public meetings that
need to be given due notice.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.

Ream.

Are there other items.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I think that we want to
--- I thought it was the will of the Council to prepare
a letter that includes the comments and questions that
we had concerning the Roadless Rule in this meeting,
and that this would be submitted to the appropriate
parts of the Forest Service.

So I'd move that we do that and then we
can discuss it.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. It's
been moved by Mr. Schroeder and seconded by Mr.
Hernandez that we add to the letter that we are writing
to the Federal Subsistence Board, that the -- sorry,
Mr. Schroeder, could you restate the motion?
MR. SCHROEDER: Yes. This would be a letter to the appropriate parts of the Forest Service who are working on the Roadless Rule, that memorialized our comments made during this session, and that also may start to be something of the backbone of the comments that we end up submitting to the -- when we finally have a document from them.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: So this is a second letter, a separate letter?

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, this is to the Forest Service.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder. So it's been moved and seconded that we develop a letter to the Alaska Roadless Team that incorporates the discussion that we had on our -- during this briefing that we've had today on the Alaska Roadless Rule. Are there any other discussion items or things that you'd want to include in that letter.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I think in the interest of time we've kind of spent a lot of time on this and we usually get a transcript in about, two or three weeks, if our excellent court reporter puts us on the top of the pile.

(Laughter)

MR. SCHROEDER: And I believe that that record has enough in it to allow a draft here to pull out what's been said so far.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder.

Any other comments from Council members. Discussion.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I would like to bring up a point that I made in my opening statement of Council comments that, a lot of times we ask for these
letters and we're kind of asking that we're going to be putting together some pretty big letters with two hours or so left in our meeting time and we always put that burden on to our coordinator and it slows down our correspondence a little sometimes and I'm wondering if we can identify other Staff to help draft those letters, or whether or not members of the Council will be able to draft those letters before we leave, to get some of that language going and started so we can expedite our correspondence a little quicker. Is that something we can direct to Staff, can we name Staff that might be able to help out with that letter writing?

Mr. Whitford, can I call you up to the table, please.

MR. WHITFORD: Yes.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Whitford. Do you have Staff that would be able to help draft up some of that language before we adjourn our meeting this round, that would be helpful in expediting the correspondence that we hope that goes out, specifically on this Alaska Roadless Rule?

MR. WHITFORD: I think so. Were you hoping to draft that letter in the next couple of hours or would that be something that a group could work on this evening for those folks that are spending -- or are leaving tomorrow?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Yeah, I'm just trying to get the process started because sometimes we leave the meeting and it'll be a couple months before the transcripts, and the letter gets drafted off of the transcripts -- I know the transcripts become available before that but, you know, then they wait for everything that's in the transcripts, sometimes it's quicker and easier to do it while it's all fresh on our mind, we just had this discussion. So even if you were so inclined to start taking a stab at it yourself, just getting some things down on paper would be really helpful and us being able to expedite some of our correspondence a little better.

MR. WHITFORD: Okay, I think -- I can
volunteer to be part of that group, I can't guarantee
I'll have something on paper today but I definitely
will in the next two weeks. Terry Suminski and I will
both pull that together and we will work with the two
Council members that are part of that group.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great, thank
you. I'm just trying to allocate resources. Other --
is there any other discussion on the motion.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
It would have been good to see what the State's
position is or what their working group had come up
with so they can -- so we can figure out if anything
that we agree with with them kind of aligns and put
that in the letter as well. But it's kind of late in
the game for that. But I think going forward, I think
this is kind of a lesson learned, that we should have
that information in front of us as well.

So just a thought.

Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Howard. I believe that the State Advisory Working
Group did publish their -- the work that they did and
forwarded on to the Governor in that advisory capacity
and we can access that information, I believe, on line;
is that correct, so we do have access to that info.

Any other discussion items on the
motion.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just on the contents of
the motion and I'd be able to work with Don and Deanna
on finaling on this. We really weren't scheduled to
take a different action on roadless because we haven't
been presented with alternatives to consider, although
some of us, may out of an inclination to support one of
the alternatives, one alternative that was mentioned a
number of times, the no action alternative, but I'm not
certain that we could take any action on that at this
moment.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Where are we at with the motion on the floor.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Call for the question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Question's been called. All in favor of the motion to draft and submit a letter to the Alaska Roadless Rule Team that incorporates the comments and discussion that we've had regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule here today, all in favor of doing that please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed, say nay.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

Ms. Grewe, did you have a question or comment that you'd like to make back?

MS. GREWE: Yes, and it was just related on the alternatives. The one thing that I failed to mention and I think it would be beneficial for this group, that while I said earlier that we tend to hold the DEIS close until we release it to all the public, but it -- it has been recommended by the Roadless Team that we release something in concept about each of the six alternatives that will give you a better idea of what each of the six look like. Probably not the full detail and maps, anyway that material has been forwarded to the Washington office for review right now, so I think you will see something before the release of the DEIS in July, but it will be in concept primarily.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Ms. Needham. I think it would be appropriate that I also make a motion that we form this work group, I guess we'll call it a work group, I think that's more what it is, that we form this work group to formulate, look
over information and kind of formulate some draft ideas
to put before the full Council for their consideration
at a special teleconference meeting that will happen
sometime this summer. Yeah, so I make that as a
motion.

MR. HOWARD: Second.

MR. KITKA: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Excuse me, and the
subcommittee will include myself, Mr. Schroeder and Mr.
Douville.

MR. HOWARD: Second, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. It's
been moved and seconded that we form a working group
that will gather the information regarding the Alaska
Roadless Rule to bring the recommendation back to the
full Council and that working group will consist of Mr.
Schroeder, Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Howard at this time.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Mr. Douville.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Sorry, Mr.
Douville. Still trying to get you in there Albert.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Is there any
discussion on the motion.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I guess you can throw me in as an alternate, since
there's already been two votes for me.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Howard. My persistence pays off.

Any other discussion.

MR. KITKA: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Question's been
called. All in favor of the motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

Any other action we'd like to take regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I think Ms. Perry's going to remind us that we do need to decide whether or not we're going to call a special meeting over the summer.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Madame Chair.

According to the Federal Register that I read a little bit of earlier, we do need to at least set aside the week in which we think we are going to hold the meeting because it needs to be on public record, and this will be the only time that we are on the record before that meeting.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Ms. Perry. Is there a motion.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: I think we're in a little bit of a bind there because we don't know exactly when we can act on an issue document and given how this is fast-tracked, we're not sure when that's going to be. I'm not sure that there's a hard and fixed rule for setting up special meetings. Perhaps we could ask Mr. Doolittle if he has information on that, he can advise us, if he's here.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He's on his way to the airport.
MR. SCHROEDER: I don't think we can set a time at this time, at this moment.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

There's 45 days -- you're allowed 45 days to comment before the comment period is closed, so -- no?

MS. GREWE: Sixty.

MR. HOWARD: Six days.

MS. GREWE: So if we remain on schedule, which we have so far in this project, speaking to the expedited timeframe, we're looking to release the DEIS early July, so theoretically the public comment period would close shortly after Labor Day. So if you wanted to hear what people said at the subsistence hearings, I think your expeditious route is probably to have somebody present at those meetings. Those meetings will occur quickly after the release of the DEIS, so I'm thinking mid-July to late July is when there'll be two weeks of meetings, then perhaps you want to take a couple of weeks to digest yourselves and meet two weeks prior to the close of the 60 day period. I'm sort of brainstorming here out loud. But if you feel like you have to set your date today, I would shoot for the end of August and do it more towards the end of the 60 day period. But if at all possible, I mean my first recommendation is that you wait to set that date and I can work with Deanna, I don't know your charter or the bylaws under which you operate but that seems to be your wisest manoeuver. If you have to set a date I would do it towards later in August. But just know the USDA could expedite this faster. They're given three months to review the DEIS, they might only take a month, I don't know. They could take longer. It's truly -- yeah, it's hard telling. It's outside of my hands.

Yeah.

(Microphone dinging)

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are you cutting me off.
(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

So if you have 60 days after they put the product out then that gives us time to set a date from what their estimated completion time is to 60 days. So I have to agree with Mr. Schroeder, I think face to face conversation is more valuable than over the phone so we can almost -- Madame Chair, if I may, we could almost have the conversation from the working group before the meeting starts so we have an idea where the direction is and at the same time we can let the public know during this time that we're going to have our own meeting and -- Madame Chair, what that does is it sets precedence on how important we feel this process is and how we want to be a part of it and funding should follow the importance of that.

So, thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard.

Mr. Ream.

MR. REAM: Thank you, Madame Chair. I thought that maybe Deanna could advise us of when the window is for the fall meetings. It's not unprecedented for Councils to meet during their fall meetings at the end of August so if you wanted to do everything together, you might be able to do that.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Yeah, thank you for that. As Mr. Kitka just advised, that we have a number of commercial fishing members on our committee and we usually typically don't choose the early portion of that cycle for that reason as it's hard for us to establish a quorum for that. So I'm not sure we would want to entertain trying to meet at the early portion of that cycle.

Any Council member can correct me if I'm wrong on that though.
(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Do we need to vote that we will, even though we won't pick a date, do we need to vote that we will have a special meeting over the summertime to address this issue after the DEIS becomes available?

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Madame Chair. I think that would be appropriate and we can't -- since the planning team can't tell us when its release date is, we can't make an intelligent choice on when to have our meeting. We're already getting jerked around by this process, totally, so I'm not really willing to spend very much more time on trying to figure out when a document might be released so that we might be able to comment at the right time. So when we know when it's released then we'll set up our meeting. I believe the Federal Register notice has to go in -- we have to give notice, is it 15 or 30 days, Deanna, it's something like that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Schroeder, it's 15 days, but to publish in the Federal Public Register, I'm being told that it could take up to eight weeks for it to get through process and be published by Federal Register, so that's two months.

MR. SCHROEDER: So let's put a motion on the floor that we will have a special meeting once -- to be scheduled once we have a firm date for the release of the document.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Is there a second to the motion.

MR. WRIGHT: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. It's been moved and seconded by Mr. Frank [sic], that we will call a special meeting for the Regional Advisory Council over the summer after the draft environmental impact statement for the Alaska Roadless Rule is available, we'll pick that date then.
Any discussion.

MR. BEMIS: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Question's been called.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Let's have a little discussion.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez would like to have a little discussion. Please lead.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, this issue of public notification of a meeting, it still sounds to me like if we wait until they announce that the document is ready to comment on, it still sounds to me like we don't have time to publish a notice that we're going to have a meeting, and is it my understanding that even if it's a special meeting it still has to be publicly noticed?

MS. PERRY: That is correct, Mr. Chair.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. It just doesn't sound like waiting until the document is out really legally gives us a enough time to schedule that meeting that you're talking about Bob. I think we need to -- my question is going to be is there some leeway in when we schedule a meeting of changing the date of that meeting, because I mean it's not unprecedented, we did it this time. We had a meeting scheduled for a month ago and here we are with a postponement. So what are the procedures there for changing the date of a scheduled meeting. I don't know, maybe we're getting too far into the woods here. But it seems like we need to pick a date that would be most likely to be effective and then if possible delaying it, go with that option.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Ms. Perry.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, I would have to probably consult with OSM to be confident in my answer. We have a window for these windows that's posted in the published -- or published in the Federal Register, I am not sure how to proceed so I would need to make a call.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Can we postpone this
vote until maybe we can get a little more information
before we adjourn?

MR. SCHROEDER: Let's table it.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I didn't hear
your response, Mr. Schroeder, to that question.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, we could table the
motion, which we can pull it off the table when Deanna
has that information.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. It sounds
like we should table the motion so we can get some more
information.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I know there's a process to tabling something and you
also have to state when you're going to take it off the
table but that's not why I'm chiming in.

I seem to remember the gentleman
sitting next to you, I don't know why his name just
vanished, it could be.....

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Stewart.

MR. HOWARD: .....it could refer back
to Ms. Needham's issue awhile ago.

But what I'm getting at is, is he did
reference that he could extend the comment period if he
felt the need to. I could have heard him wrong but
that sure seems like what he had stated. So that may
be something we want to take into consideration is to
ask that happen for this Council.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Nicole.

MS. GREWE: Through the Chair. Mr.
Howard, I believe Forest Supervisor Earl Stewart was
likely speaking to the Central Tongass project,
different project. He has more discretion in that
project than Alaska Roadless Rulemaking. So that
comment period is going to be 60 days. It most likely
will -- I mean if the past predicts the future it will not be extended. If the past predicts the future we will remain on timeline.

I just want to offer one clarification here. I think that this Council will know -- I can let you know when the DEIS will be published prior to the DEIS being published. And I thought of that as Mr. Hernandez made the comment that you needed, whatever, so much time -- that you won't know when the DEIS publishes until it publishes and that's when the countdown starts, right, but I can give Deanna a head's up. It's just right now the document has not been submitted to the USDA yet, so we're a week behind on that, and I know as soon as it goes there, as the weeks go by I'll have a better idea if we're going to be on target with July 5th, or the early July date, you know, it's right around the 4th of July. So I don't think you have to wait to call your meeting until that DEIS is published. It might be advisable to wait until I can give Deanna a better idea as things progress through the USDA. But, again, I don't know your bylaws and your requirements. I'm hearing Deanna talk about the real challenge is the eight week notice of the Federal Register. And keep in mind the USDA has those same timeframes that we need to hit as well, we need to have so much notice before we get our project published in the Federal Register, which is why, I, as a team member, will have a better idea whether we're going to hit that July date for publishing because I watch as things approach, the Federal Register.

If that makes sense.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: So just as a followup, I mean that could be very helpful but I also am questioning when we -- I know at every meeting we always kind of hold a Council vote as to when we're going to meet again, I think that might be one of the requirements, although I've never really asked that question before, so that kind of raises the possibility that we may actually have to have some kind of a Council vote to decide on when the next meeting is going to be so -- I don't know, it looks like Deanna just went to find something out, but, yeah, we'll have -- that's helpful, and we'll hash this out and maybe we
can come up with something.

Maybe we could take a break and revisit this here after a little discussion.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. We do have a motion on the floor, I mean we haven't officially tabled it yet, right. So we will come -- we will take a 10 minute break and come back to finish out and address this motion that we have.

(Off record)

(On record)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. I just wanted to let everybody know that we still have a number of items, a couple of action items outside of the Alaska Roadless Rule on our agenda and as long as we still have a quorum and a court reporter we can go for as long as need to today in order to cover the items on the agenda. So even though it looks like the rest of the room is clearing out we can still continue our meeting in order to do the work that we need to finish here today unless you guys just have a strike and walk out on me.

(Laughter)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. With that we do have a motion on the floor. I guess I will restate the motion and find out what we want to do with it.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Well, I've got new information too so when Bob gets back.

MR. DOUVILLE: Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Isn't that a tabled motion, doesn't have to do anything if it's tabled.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I don't know that we officially tabled it and I just spoke with Mr. Schroeder who was talking about potentially withdrawing it but then he didn't follow me in.
Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Madame Chair. Based on the discussion that's ensured, with the concurrence of the second I'd like to withdraw the motion that's on the floor, on the table, wherever it is.

MR. HERNANDEZ: I seconded it.

REPORTER: No. It was Mr. Wright.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I think it was Mr. Wright who seconded it.

Do you concur?

MR. WRIGHT: (Nods affirmatively)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay, the motion's been withdrawn.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Ms. Needham. And the reason that, you know, we kind of asked Bob to withdraw the motion, during the break we had a chance to have a telephone conversation with OSM Assistant Director and he informed me that it is within the ability of the Chair to call a special meeting without a vote of the Council. He did say that we do have to abide by the timeframes of public notice and he is checking on that, but he thinks in such a case 30 days might be possibly adequate for public notice, but even if it were longer than that I think we will have enough time from what Ms. Grewe informed us on that she could give us notification that I could schedule a special meeting, get it publicly noticed without having to decide on that right now. So that's the way it sounds right now. So we don't need Bob's motion to -- I can't remember exactly what it was but it was about scheduling a meeting, so we'll hold off on that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez. And I will add that Mr. Doolittle from the OSM did just call back to confirm what you presented and also said that he confirmed this with Ken Lord, the Special Counsel to the Federal Subsistence Board, and that the meeting needs to be publicly noticed but does not have to be published in the Federal Register, so
that was a clarification that he made.

So are we -- are there any other action items associated with the Alaska Roadless Rule at this time.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Hearing none, I would like to ask our coordinator if we're ready to move on with -- I don't know if I need to ask our coordinator, I need to find out whether or not Ms. Becker is on the line from Bureau of Land Management.

MS. BECKER: Yes, I am.

MR. WHITFORD: Can I add something to that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: One moment, we do have something from Mr. Whitford.

MR. WHITFORD: Okay, sorry about that. Madame Chair. Tom Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader. Tom Doolittle was pretty clear that the special meeting should be through via teleconference and also it would have an open public line, so it wouldn't be convening this Council, it would be via teleconference. I just wanted to make sure that was clear.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Tom. That was my intention, that it would be publicly noticed and it would be a teleconference and there would be opportunity in that teleconference for, you know, the public to call in. So I'm sure that's the way it would be set up.

MR. WHITFORD: Okay.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right, thank you. And, thank you, Ms. Becker for being patient with us and sticking with us today and I'd like to call on you for the next agenda item which is an update regarding the Sitka Airport dock project.

MS. BECKER: Okay. So at this point we
have -- BLM has received an application for a dock in Sitka. It will extend out 112 feet from land out into the waters. The reason that BLM is involved in this is the -- we have jurisdiction over submerged lands in that area. This dock would be 112-foot long. The widest part would be 29-foot wide for a moorage and a gangway 5-foot wide by 80-foot long.

For this gentleman to moor his boat in his Corps permit it does state that he has to have lights so the dock is visible. With herring concerns we would not allow him to install the dock until after May 1st, which our understanding is after the herring season.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Thank you.

Are there any questions or comments from Council.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. It sounds like you recognize it might be an issue with the herring subsistence fishery in Federal waters there. You say that the dock would not be installed until after May 1st. What about in subsequent years? Is the dock going to remain in the water year round or will you have the ability to pull the dock during herring spawning time?

MS. BECKER: The dock would remain in place year round. At this point -- and I did send documents. There is a map kind of showing the plan of what he's going to put in and how big it's going to be. There's like two cement pillars that would be attached to the land that the dock would float on.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair.

First question, has Sitka Tribe been informed on this dock project?
MS. BECKER: Yes, sir, they have.

MR. KITKA: What was their response?

MS. BECKER: At this point everything is open for comment until April 15th. We have not heard back from them yet.

MR. KITKA: Okay. I just was curious because this is one of the areas that if the herring are not bothered and left to spawn normally, this is one of the places they'd spawn.

MS. BECKER: And that's good information to have. We were not aware of that.

MR. KITKA: Yes. They've spawned there for thousands of years.

Thank you.

MR. KITKA: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, just a question for Harvey. I'm not that familiar with that area. Are there other docks in that area? I'm curious to know if there are problems with docks interfering with herring spawn or the collection of herring spawn?

MR. KITKA: Don, the only part that would be a problem is if they start driving the pilings during the spawn or make undo noise.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. So once the dock was in place it wouldn't necessarily impede herring spawn or the gathering of the herring spawn?

MR. KITKA: No, Don, it wouldn't bother it.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there any other Council questions or discussion regarding this.

Mr. Wright.
MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair.
The herring eggs will still be there when they start, right, or will they be already spawned and out of the way? If there is going to be pile driving, then you certainly will get some cloudy water in there because I've seen it happen when I was seining at Point Sophia, so there's got to be some dirt rising and settling on herring eggs if they're still there.

So I just want to know.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Frank, primarily the herring will have moved off of there. The ones that will survive after two weeks. After you get down to the third or fourth layer then whatever is left at the fourth layer will probably perish anyway.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there any other questions for Ms. Becker or discussion items from the Council.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you for calling in, Ms. Becker, and for the update. Is there any action that the Council wants to take on this matter?

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I really would have liked to have heard what Sitka Tribe had to say on this matter. It's within the Sitka Tribe's territory.

Thank you.

MS. BECKER: When we hear from Sitka Tribe, we can let Deanna know.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: That would be great, Ms. Becker. Please forward that communication on to our coordinator when it becomes available for distribution.

MS. BECKER: The comment period on this
project is open right now. We're just doing scoping on it to get ready to write the environmental assessment. You guys are more than welcome and I'm encouraging you to send us any comments that you have. If May 1 is too little time to respond and we should extend that out a little bit, please send us that comment with specific dates that would be better for the construction of this dock.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Madame Chair. I believe probably if you gave it another 15 days, somewhere around May 15th, probably all the herring would be gone and probably the little hatched ones would have probably left the area by then.

MS. BECKER: Thank you for that information. We were not aware of that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. The question is for Mr. Kitka. The current harbors that are in Sitka, was there herring spawn there before the harbors were built?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Mr. Howard. Yes, the herring spawn used to happen through the channel and happened right where the hotel is now. That was one of the starting places of the herring spawn. We used to have a local stock that used to start spawning there and then the ocean stock would come and mix with them and the spawn would spread all the way across the Sound.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Follow up, Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. It's not necessarily a follow up. I mean it's an observation, I guess. I asked the question because I don't know if there was a spawn there before the
harbor. I know there isn't one now. I know the herring go in there and out of there because I see people catching them off the dock, but I've never seen a spawn at any of the harbors. So I think that should be a consideration as part of this process to make sure that this area isn't affected by this harbor.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. Are we ready to move to the next item?

(Council nodding)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I'd like to ask if Mr. Clarence Summers is on the line.

MR. SUMMERS: Can you hear me? This is Clarence Summers, National Park Service.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Great. Thank you, Mr. Summers. Mr. Summers, we're hoping you'll be able to give us a briefing so that we can potentially take action regarding an appointment to the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission.

MR. SUMMERS: That is correct, Madame Chairman. I'd like to on behalf of the Park Service thank the Council for your efforts and continued involvement in the Federal Subsistence Program. Your recommendations are greatly appreciated. I know it's late in the afternoon, but you've got an opportunity to take action on a vacant seat formerly held by Mr. Sensmeier.

If you turn to your Regional Council Charter Page 76 of your workbook under duties, (e), there's a requirement to appoint one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of ANILCA. Currently that seat is vacant. The requirements for appointment for Regional Council appointees require that the person appointed be a member of a Regional Council or an advisory committee, in this case it would be Yakutat Advisory Committee, within the region and also engage in subsistence uses in the Park.

You currently have interest from a City
of Yakutat Borough Assembly member Sam Demmert. He's a 50-year resident of Yakutat and engaged in subsistence uses. He currently serves on the Yakutat Planning and Zoning Board. He's also listed as an active member of the local advisory committee in Yakutat.

In addition to that you've got Harold Robbins is recently appointed to the Regional Council and Mr. Larry Bemis, who is present. So at this meeting you'd have an opportunity to appoint one of the three to this seat. I'll stop and allow questions.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Summers.

Are there questions from members of the Council.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Summers. We have Mr. Bemis here with us. We could ask him if he would want to serve, but how about Mr. Robbins, who is not present at our Council meeting this week due to a family engagement, and Mr. Demmert. Have you talked to them to see if either of them are interested in an appointment?

MR. SUMMERS: I've talked to Mr. Demmert. I know Barbara Cellarius, who coordinates the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission, unfortunately she's in Portland at an anthropological conference. You should have in your notebook a spring report that she submitted and it captures their need to take action.

I've recently talked to her and to answer your question more directly I spoke with Mr. Demmert. He contacted both Barbara and myself to let us know that he wants to continue -- he'd like to be appointed to this position. I personally had a conversation with Larry Bemis regarding this, so he's well aware and present at the meeting, so he can speak to his interest.

Unfortunately, I haven't spoke with or presented any information regarding this to Mr. Robbins. He's not present at this meeting. Now for
this appointment it's a three-year appointment. Their members serve at the pleasure of the appointing source, so this would be the Southeast Regional Council. The member serves until reappointed and that appointment can come before three years if you want to remove the individual and appoint someone else.

I think from the standpoint of representation you should have a flyer that contains the current roster for the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission. I forwarded that yesterday and you should have it in your packet. If you look at that roster, Yakutat is currently not represented. The Commission continues to meet. They recently had a work session. They plan to meet again to address wildlife proposals.

The primary purpose of the Commission is to make recommendations on Federal subsistence management in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park to both the governor and the Secretary of Interior. They also provide recommendations to the Councils. Three Councils make appointments by the way to this Commission. Eastern Interior and Southcentral appoint one individual. Currently the Southeast seat is vacant and it would be to the communities' disadvantage if they're not represented on the Commission.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Summers.

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Thank you, Madame Chair. Mr. Summers, this is Larry Bemis. Yeah, we briefly talked and since the last time I talked to you I was considering the position until I received communication with Sam Demmert, which he was really interested, and I think with all the years of him being a subsistence user and a resident of Yakutat and living there for the amount of time and the use of the land he would be -- you know, not ruling out Harold Robbins, but I would say that Sam fits the criteria about being on the advisory board and the city council and also that he asked that I bring his name up when this came about. So I'll turn it back to you, Madame Chair.
MR. SUMMERS: I don't have any other information other than you can by simple nomination and a motion passed to appoint this person. Take action and you're done for now. The Park Service Superintendent will work with whoever you appoint to provide them with support. They serve under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and get the same accommodation that RAC members receive.

With that I'll stop and let you take action.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Summers.

Mr. Ream, did you have something for us.

MR. REAM: Yes, thank you, Madame Chair. Just briefly I wanted to let the Council know that I did reach out to Harold Robbins a couple times over the past couple of weeks. He must be out of town and hasn't responded. But at this point we wouldn't know his interest nor whether he subsists within the boundaries of the Park.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Schroeder, then Mr. Douville.

MR. SCHROEDER: Good to hear your voice again Clarence although you sound like you have a bad cold. In any case, when is your next meeting for the Wrangell-St. Elias advisory committee.

MR. SUMMERS: I can say that the plan is to meet before the fall RAC meeting. They had a work session just recently in March. Due to the shutdown they had to reschedule and they had problems with the Federal Register, the same as I've heard earlier today, but the plan is to have a meeting in the fall and I can be more specific here before your meeting ends.

Yeah, it's good to hear your voice and
it's just a pleasure to know that you're still contributing to this program along with Frank Wright and some of the people that I know personally. I've worked and lived in Yakutat during the '80s for about seven years and served both Wrangell-St. Elias and the Glacier Bay National Park as the Lead Park Manager. I'll try to get that date to you as soon as possible.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Madame Chair. Sam has expressed his interest to me and listening to what Mr. Bemis says he's qualified and definitely has interest. I will move to appoint Sam Demmert to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission.

MR. YEAGER: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I think Mr. Yeager seconded it. It's been moved and seconded to have Mr. Demmert appointed to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission. Is there any discussion on the motion.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair. Procedural, are we supposed to nominate him first and then appoint him after?

MR. SUMMERS: Madame Chair. Clarence Summers. I'll address that. You're on the record with this motion. If it's in the affirmative to appoint Sam, what we'll do is I'll work with your coordinator so that we can have a letter from the Southeast Regional Council stating that there's been an appointment. They're example letters.

Twenty-one members of this Commission Program are appointed by Regional Councils and so there's a process in place where once the Council makes a motion, appoints an individual, a letter is transmitted to the Park Service and we follow up and acknowledge that appointment unless we discover that,
let's just say, the individual is not a qualified user of the Park or not in good standing with the Regional Council or local advisory committee.

Thank you very much.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Mr. Douville is trying to get me in trouble apparently.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: By that response, Madame Chair, does that mean, no, we didn't need to nominate?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Madame Chair. It was my intention to nominate. It's been a long day and I said appoint, so take it from there, I guess. If one or the other works, I'm fine with that.

MR. HOWARD: Call the question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called.....

MR. SUMMERS: This is Mr. Summers. Hello. One other point of information I'll try to address. I think I understand your concern. The SRC Charter identifies the appointing source as the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. So you're the appointing authority. The governor appoints three members, the Secretary of Interior appoints three and in this situation the Regional Council for Southeast will appoint one member because the other two members that come from Regional Councils come from two different Regional Councils. The Southcentral and the Eastern Interior have appointment authority.

So a simple motion passed appointing the individual will satisfy this action. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Summers. The question was called, but did you have a question Mr. Howard?

MR. HOWARD: No, Madame Chair. I was going to call for the question again.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Madame Chair. This is to Clarence. As you know, Ray Sensmeier was our representative on the Commission for a number of years and before that it was Bert Adams. I was trying to remember who was before that. We've enjoyed the two-way communication. I'm wondering, subject to availability, if Mr. Demmert could attend a meeting of ours, our next meeting, so that we could maintain that tie with the Resource Commission.

Thank you.

MR. SUMMERS: Thanks for the comment. What I'll do is I'll speak with the Superintendent. He coordinates the day-to-day services for the Commission and that might be a possibility. I know we've met. I think on several occasions the Council has convened in Yakutat. It's been a few years since that has occurred. I will look into this and report back.

I know that historically we have had -- there's seven Commissions. Some of the members have attended who are on local advisory committees as part of their training. This is Sam's first time appointed, so I'm sure we can work something out in terms of accommodating travel to one of your Regional Council meetings.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Do you ever consider like alternates on this Resource Commission?

MR. SUMMERS: To answer your question, yes. There's a provision to identify alternates in the Charter.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. We have a motion on the floor to appoint Sam Demmert to the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. The question has been called, so I'd like to take a vote. All in favor say aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I would -- maybe the Council would consider having Mr. Bemis as an alternate if he is willing.

MR. BEMIS: Sure.

MR. HOWARD: Second that motion, Madame Chair.

MR. KITKA: Call for the question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It's been moved and seconded and the question has been called to have Mr. Larry Bemis as an alternate on the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed say nay.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

MR. SUMMERS: Madame Chair and Council members. Let the letter reflect your actions and I'll say good day. Have a pleasant afternoon.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Is Jennifer Hanlon online?

(No response)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I have a number
of agenda items actually. Do we want to close out agency reports before we take up the rest of our business? Do we have any other agency reports?

(No comments - Ms. Perry is whispering)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. The next item is -- well, I should ask if there's anyone in the room that has an agency report that didn't do it. Any Native organizations or tribal governments at this time.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. That will conclude agency reports. Some of the work that we need to go back and finish up that we started earlier, the first one of those items is the special action request for Unit 2 wolves in order to handle the gap between the new State regulation and what is currently on the books within the Federal regulations. I will have staff come up. It looks like it might be a PowerPoint presentation, is that correct, Deanna?

MS. PERRY: It's just the language of the special action.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay. Thank you.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: While Deanna is pulling the information up for this next item, I would like to mention to the members of the Council that Jennifer Hanlon with the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe has sent us some information regarding a proposal that she's putting forward in order to ask for more money to do water quality monitoring north of Yakutat near Icy Bay. She's been developing programs to monitor water quality on the Yakutat Forelands over the last year and has been funded to do so and they're looking at expanding their programs.

Information was provided in our folders on our table and she was going to try to call in. She's attending a meeting right now, but she was going to call in and ask whether or not we could support Yakutat's efforts by writing a letter for her grant
application. That's just kind of a briefing.

After this next presentation I'll ask if you want to do so. If you want to take action on it, we can, or if you don't want to do so at that time, that is fine too, but I thought I'd give that quick update since she wasn't on the phone so that you knew what was forthcoming and also to fill the gap in time.

It looks like we have the language up and ready. Mr. Whitford, you look like you're ready to kind of give us a summary of what's going on here.

MR. WHITFORD: Sure. Madame Chair, Council members. Again, my name is Tom Whitford. I'm the Regional Subsistence Program Leader for the Forest Service and I also have Terry Suminski here.

This language should look familiar to you. This is a special action request. Again, it's a temporary special action request because it's longer than 60 days. This reflects the language for the two wildlife proposals for Unit 2 wolves that the Council supported yesterday for hunting and trapping wolves in Unit 2.

Susan Oehlers typed this up and I made a couple corrections and then I was the lucky one to present this temporary special action. It should be pretty straightforward. It reflects the language that the Council agreed on yesterday.

Do you want me to read through the action or do you want to just take the time to go ahead and look at it up on the screen?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I think we can just take a second to look at it on the screen.

MR. WHITFORD: Okay.

(Pause)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. What's the wish of the Council.

MR. DOUVILLE: Looks great.

MR. WHITFORD: There's one typo there.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Any other changes. Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Perhaps that should be 2019-2020 because it goes into the new year.

MR. WHITFORD: Yes.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. Any other changes or comments. At this time I'd entertain a motion to submit.....

MR. WHITFORD: There's a little more to read if you scroll down. This would be the new regulation that's identical to what was in the two wildlife proposals yesterday.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'll make the motion to submit this as our proposal concerning Unit 2 wolves.

MR. DOUVILLE: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Douville. It's been moved and seconded that we submit this special action proposal as written on the screen. Is there any discussion.

Mr. Schroeder.

MR. SCHROEDER: Just so we have a clean record adjacent to this action that we discussed this issue at great length yesterday and the idea is to align the Federal season and bag limit and sealing requirements with what has been adopted by the Board of Game. So we've done a thorough discussion of this and this will benefit subsistence users by reducing regulatory complexity as well as providing additional subsistence opportunity.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Schroeder.
MR. YEAGER: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called. It's been moved and seconded that we forward this special action proposal as written. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

MR. WHITFORD: Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The next item that we have that we've left a little undone was whether or not the Council wanted to take action on submitting comments to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding the change in the requirement for the -- the guiding requirements and the logbook reporting for the guiding requirements.

Does the Council wish to take action.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you. I think the suggestion there was that we might want to draft a letter to the Department of Fish and Game expressing our opinions on this matter.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: That letter would be submitted prior to the deadline for comments on April 8th.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Yes. I was trying to remember what the deadlines here were. I think we had a couple of different issues with what the Department was proposing. We felt that the Logbook Program was necessary to gather information and monitor what happens on Federal public lands.

I was trying to remember here, but I think we also discussed -- and somebody might chime in here, but I think we also discussed the need to maybe...
send to the Federal Subsistence Board our desire that should the State drop this Logbook Program that the Federal program might put a logbook requirement in conjunction with the permitting process for use on Federal lands by guides.

So I think there might actually be letters going to two different agencies, Subsistence Board as well as the Department of Fish and Game.

So I'm going to throw that out there and see if the Council would want to do two letters.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

I think that might be a little redundant because in order to guide on Federal lands you have to have a Forest Service operating plan with that watershed or that river system listed and that is signed by the District Ranger. In order to get that part of the documentation you have to provide a sportfishing guide license that you get from the State. I don't know if we submitted something requiring or asking the Federal Board to make it mandatory.

I don't know if I'm making it more confusing or not, but they're basically two separate things in order to guide in freshwater you have a State freshwater guide license and then you have a Federal Forest Service operating plan that states that you can take commercial clients so to speak to these locations on the Forest.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Douville.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. In that plan that you have to file, I guess what I'm looking for is there any requirement within that plan that the guides report on what is caught or essentially the information that would be in the State logbook that the State is presently requiring. Is any of that information required in your permit and plan process, if you know that?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Yeager, you
can answer that question or should we ask Mr. Suminski?

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I'll try to cork Terry on this one. So two things.
One is as a guide you still are required by the State
to log where you fished even if it's on Federal lands.
If you're in a stream, you still have to write down
where you're at and document the person and the fish
that you took, but then you have also a use report that
has to be filed after the end of your season.

In that use report you list how many
clients you took to this certain area, how long you
fished there, but you're not required to document the
species that you take. In your operating plan that you
submit before the season you list this area and then
you would specify steelhead fishing or trout fishing or
salmon fishing, whatever.

So there is documentation both on the
Federal side and on the State side as a freshwater
guide as long as that freshwater guide logbook by the
State is still in play.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Right. But the issue
is the State is planning on dropping their logbook
program, so how much information are we losing if they
drop that program? It sounds like there's some
reporting that goes back to the Federal managers, but
not as extensive.

I guess that's what we need to tease
out here.

MR. YEAGER: Through the Chair, Mr.
Hernandez. So what information we would be losing is
species, you'd be losing fishing license number from
the angler and you'd be losing how many fish were
caught and how many fish were released and if any were
retained.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you very
much. It sounds like that's the kind of information
we'd want to get though. Terry, you came to the desk.
Are you confirming what Mr. Yeager is saying?

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair. John
did a beautiful job of explaining it. I'm not
intimately familiar with what's in the special use
permit, but to do any commercial activity for that matter on Forest Service land you have to have a special use permit. What the Forest Service tracks through that permit is like Mr. Yeager said, the use; how many clients you took, where you took them, those kind of things.

Since the State had the logbook requirement, the fisheries information, the number of fish caught, where they were caught, species, anglers, that was reported to the Department of Fish and Game. So if that goes away and you did want to capture that information, I think the proper place to write a letter to see if that requirement could be added to a special use permit would be the Forest Service, probably Mr. Stewart. The Federal Subsistence Board has no business in that special use permitting, so that's not in their purview.

That's mainly what I wanted to say.

Thank you.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Terry. I didn't know if it would require a regulatory action from the Board, but apparently not. It's just a Forest Service requirement at the discretion of the Regional Forester or Forest Supervisor, I guess.

Is that what I'm understanding?

MR. SUMINSKI: Mr. Chair. I don't want to overspeak how those conditions are put on -- I don't really know how they're put on the special use permits, but that would be the place to start or maybe we could even do some internal investigation of how that might happen in the event that the Freshwater Logbook goes away.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I guess in this -- we took a lot of comment on this. There was quite a bit of conversation about it and I guess it would seem that if we're going to write a letter addressing this to the Forest Service that those comments could possibly be included.
MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair, are the comments going to the Forest Service or the Fish and Game? That's one question. Second question is bag limit for users on the river system. Did you say there's something that the Forest Service can look at as far as a special use permit?

MR. SUMINSKI: Through the Chair, Mr. Howard. The Forest Service would not be implementing bag limits. That's controlled by the Department of Fish and Game and the Federal Subsistence Board.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. To answer your first question, Mr. Howard, I think we were considering submitting comments to Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Mr. Hernandez did talk about a second letter, but it sounded like we might not need that one.

Did you have a follow up? Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Did you need a motion to submit a letter?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: We would need a motion.

Mr. Yeager then Mr. Hernandez.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you. One more piece of information. The reason that I feel it's more important for the State to receive these comments is because not everybody can get a special use permit to operate on these Federal water systems. So if Mr. Douville wants to be a guide on the Stikine River, he has to go through the process, but he may not be awarded a special use permit to do this option.

If he wants to go and be a freshwater fishing guide through the State and work in State waters, he pays his $50 -- well, used to. Pays his 50 bucks, he gets a fishing guide license and goes to work. So that's where you need the data collected. That's where the majority of it is going to be coming from. Not that there isn't some from the Forest Service, but I think it's more important to track the
information on the State side.

Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Yeager.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I'm starting to understand all that now. I guess my concern is that it sounded like the State was making this decision based on budgetary concerns. I don't think our letter is likely to influence that decision unfortunately. We could write a letter just expressing our desire that they not do that.

However, I would like to see also a letter to the Forest Service stating that should the Department eliminate that Logbook Program that we would encourage the Forest Service to implement in their special use permitting process a stipulation that they gather that type of information that the State was collecting.

However, I do realize that that would not capture all of the potential -- you could have a person guiding -- wait a minute. Does every guide that operates on a river have a special use permit to do so or would we be missing some people?

MR. SUMINSKI: Yes, Mr. Chair, you would be missing people if you're only depending on reports from special use permits because that only applies to Federal lands. People operating on Federal lands. If they're operating in State waters, then there would be no requirement. The Forest Service couldn't enforce a requirement for those people to report what they caught.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Just a follow up. So the State's intention is to drop the Logbook Program on their freshwater guiding activities. Would it be correct to say that most of the freshwater guiding takes place on Federal waters or is there a significant amount of freshwater fishing that would not be under Federal management? And if it was not under Federal management, it doesn't sound like it would be under the subsistence permitting system either.
So how much are we talking about here?

MR. SUMINSKI: Mr. Chair, you got me on that one. I don't have a good idea, sorry.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Not knowing 100 percent, but I would think that there is a substantial amount of freshwater fishing north of us in interior lakes or streams, river systems. I don't know how the Federal lands are divided up up there. The Kenai River, what does that fall under? There's a ton of guiding and anglers on the Kenai every year. Without this freshwater logbook none of that gets documented. I mean just food for thought.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, but I was really only concerned with Southeast Alaska Tongass Forest. I mean that's our subsistence concern. I realize statewide it would have a lot of different effects. But as far as the Tongass goes, it does seem to me that most of the concern would be on Federal waters. If we did require logbook reporting on the permitting system you would capture maybe not all but a good portion of the activity. That's kind of where I'm leading here.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: What's the wish of the Council.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. There's a map in our book that shows all the Federal land. So when you look at that map and all the river system -- matter of fact it's sitting here on the desktop. Everything in green here is considered Federal. So every system you see in this is -- I'm assuming has to go through the Federal process as far as permitting. On Admiralty I know for sure they go through the process and they have to renew that every once in a while and if there's a violation then they stand the chance of losing their permit.

Madame Chair, I'd like to make the
motion to submit our comments to the Board of Fish
concerning the logbook and the importance we feel it is
a resource to this Council and it should be a resource
to the State as far as managing the resource.

MR. YEAGER: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It's been moved
and seconded that we submit comments to -- you said the
Board of Game?

MR. KITKA: Board of Fish.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: You said the
Board of Fish.

MR. HOWARD: Fish and Game.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Alaska
Department of Fish and Game regarding the logbook
requirements. Is there any other discussion or
questions.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Just if it's a -- maybe
I'm having another one of your moments. So while I'm
doing that -- Madame Chair, this helps us during a
conservation concern to understand what's happening in
all the water systems concerning freshwater. Also, if
it's a budget concern with the State is why they're
removing the logbooks, you heard Mr. Yeager say he'd
give part of his contribution to that cause and I'm
sure others would do so as well.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr.
Howard.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: Do we have a motion on
the floor?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: We do.
MR. DOUVILLE: I guess my question can wait until -- well, maybe I'll ask it anyway. Since this is a proposal or it's in draft form or it's being considered, would it be premature to approach the Forest Service pointing out a deficiency that may or may not happen? It probably will, but we don't know that yet.

I just wanted to say that this information even though it may have gaps in it should we request this from the Forest Service? It does have value. Years ago when we were dealing with all the steelhead issues, all this information had value. So we're not looking at that right now, but at a point in time it was quite valuable.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Douville.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Mr. Douville, I did plan to make a second motion to write a letter to the Forest Service as well after we vote on this one.

I think that will be important.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. Considering that comments need to be submitted by April 8th, I would like also to find out whether or not anybody would like to step forward and volunteer to help draft some language for our coordinator that incorporates the discussion and comments.

Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Madame Chair. I talked to Deanna already and offered assistance to draft comments and encapsulate what we said here in our discussion so that the comments could be submitted on time.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you very much. I'm glad that you did that because you obviously have a much better understanding of this process than I do. So I appreciate that.

Mr. Howard.
MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I volunteer Robert Schroeder.
(Laughter)
MR. SCHROEDER: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called. The motion is to submit comments to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Board of Fish regarding the freshwater guide logbook. All in favor say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms. Needham.
I'd also like to put forward a second motion. That motion would be that we draft a letter to the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester informing them that the Council is concerned that should the State drop their Logbook Program that we think it would be very much in the interest of the Federal Subsistence Program that that information be gathered by the Forest Service through their permitting process and their user guide operations on freshwater streams.

MR. HOWARD: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It's been moved and seconded by Mr. Howard to draft a letter to the Regional Forester and the Forest Supervisor requesting that should the State drop the logbook that the Forest Service gather that information through the Forest Service permitting process.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I'm just curious as to what the Council thought of this because it's -- granted, I agree with it, but we still
leave that loophole of unguided sport fishermen that
are fishing on the river.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard, then

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.
The understanding I have of the area where I guide,
which is mostly Chatham, the lodge doesn't allow anyone
to go on those systems for safety and other reasons
that we don't say. We just say it's a safety concern.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. If Mr.
Suminski can maybe answer a question. Thank you,
Terry. In the permitting process, you have to get a
permit if you're a guide. Do you also have to get a
permit if you are outfitting people for sport fishing
on Federal lands?

MR. SUMINSKI: Mr. Chair, the best I
could say is that any commercial activity you need to
have a special use permit. I'd be stretching my
knowledge if I tried to -- I know there's a distinction
between outfitting and guiding on the State side. I
don't know how it's handled on the Forest Service side.
I know that any commercial activity you charge people
to take them somewhere or do something there is a
special use permit requirement.

One thing I would add. Asking the
Forest Service to collect that data, we have no system
in place that's a real effective way of handling that
information and maintaining it. So it would definitely
be more ideal if the Department of Fish and Game were
the recipient of that information for fish harvest
because they have a long established database. All the
things we collect in the Federal Subsistence Program we
try to get in the State database because they have
really good data management systems.

So I just wanted to point that out.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair.
So, yes, I do both. I outfit and I guide and you do have to have a special use permit to do both. Terry is correct. Basically you are charged per activity and there are different costs per activity that you do on the Forest.

A couple points that I would make on this. The one area if you wanted to collect this data, I would recommend that you request that the data be collected on the annual use report because operators, guides, outfitters, whatever you want to call it, we have to do an annual use report at the end of our season where we document the number of clients and where we went with them.

Being the guy that does it, mine was 17 pages last year. That's where I could make those notations. It would not be developing another program to document fish. It would be something that's already in existence. It would just be a line item paragraph thing.

I think it could be handled if it was approved and okayed by the Forest Service. I'm not saying I want to create more work for myself, but I also think that that would be the easiest place to document those activities and any information pertaining to freshwater fishing done by permitted guides on Forest.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Mr. Hernandez, did you have a follow up.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Just to say that I think it's worthwhile writing a letter and getting the discussion going. Will urge the Fish and Game to maintain their program. Like I say, I think it may be worth our while to introduce that idea to the Federal managers as well. It's something that we think would be worthwhile doing and possibly it could happen. It sounds like it may not be that complicated.

I'll suggest that we vote in favor of the motion.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.
MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm sitting here remembering certain things. The only time a client becomes irresponsible is when they set foot on land. If they're fishing from a boat, they're not a part of that. Am I right or wrong in that thought process?

The other thing was I was concerned with self-guides going into certain systems without a guide for safety reasons. It's not my favorite thing to do when I'm supposed to punch the clock and go home is to go get a self-guider off the beach because apparently they don't have tide books where there's lakes in America. So at times they dry up and you have to go get them. I'm wondering if that's the case that they can fish the systems.

When I was trying to address this I was told you can't tell an American not to go into a National Park and fish because it's their right to do so and so on and so forth.

MR. SUMINSKI: Through the Chair, Mr. Howard. It's pretty clear. If you're in saltwater in a boat, then it's not Forest Service jurisdiction, so you wouldn't be required a special use permit in that situation. I think freshwater varies. It depends on the ownership of that particular body of freshwater. That's as best I can say right now.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. The question has been called. Our motion is to submit a letter to the Forest Supervisor and Regional Forester advising that if the State should drop the logbook, that some of the missing information that that logbook carried on could be picked up in the Forest Service's permit process. All in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Any opposed same sign.

(NO opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carried. Thank you. Is Jennifer Hanlon online.
MS. HANLON: Madame Chair, this is Jennifer.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Jennifer. If you'd like to give a brief presentation to the Council, you have a few minutes to do so.

MS. HANLON: Thank you, Madame Chair, Council. My name is Jennifer Hanlon. I am the environmental director at the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe. Our department provides the environmental service and programs that are intended to protect the key to a healthy Yakutat and that largely revolved around our traditional food systems.

We are currently going after a grant opportunity to continue the different water quality studies and this was prompted by a previous mineral exploration that went on in the Yakutat Forelands for about 76 square miles that were subject to mineral exploration and potential development. This ended up causing a lot of concerns by the local hunters and fishers in the region. There was a lot of concern about the effects to the water quality and it might impair the habitat.

So YTT developed a water quality monitoring pond several years ago and this pond identifies 12 different culturally important rivers in the area that we'd like to collect baseline water quality data for. There's currently very limited information on the overall water quality.

So our proposal is to seek information on the chemical and physical water quality of the area. This is really focused in on dissolved metals and hydrocarbons that are commonly associated activity, but we also believe it's good to inform our overall assessment of the health of the habitat and our subsistence resources.

So that's kind of it in a nutshell. I just wanted to be available to answer any questions and provide any information to inform your decision.

Thank you.

Hanlon.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Ms.
Are there any questions from the Council.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. Would the Council like to take action on this?

Mr. Hernandez and then Mr. Yeager.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ms. Needham. If what they're asking for is a letter of support, I would certainly be willing to make that motion.

MR. DOUVILLE: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It's been moved and seconded that the Council write a letter of support for the Yakutat Tlingit's Tribe's proposal.

Is there any discussion.

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Jennifer, I have a quick question. When is the deadline for your proposal?

MS. HANLON: The deadline is April 15th and we would like to try to submit a few days early.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Okay, thank you. Mr. Hernandez, did you have a question.

MR. HERNANDEZ: No. Just in support of the motion. We've heard lots of testimony of the importance of these waters to the subsistence needs of the people in Yakutat. Yes, I think it would be very worthwhile to be able to gather the information that they're proposing in this proposal. I think it's well worth the Council writing a letter of support for this project.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez.
Any other comments or questions from the Council.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Jennifer, is there any possibility of the information coming back to the Council just for us to look at?

MS. HANLON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Kitka for the question. I actually forgot to mention that the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe had been awarded a grant through the Department of Fish and Wildlife Services for the Partners in Fisheries Monitoring. So we are actually going to be, as of our target date, to hire someone on for a full-time fisheries biologist position to start spring of next year.

Part of that position's requirement will be attending the RAC meetings as well as the Federal Subsistence Board's meetings. So we will be able to tag onto those meetings and provide any information updates if we get funded for this project at the subsequent meeting.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you.

Any other questions or discussion at this time.

(No comments)

MR. KITKA: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called. We have a motion to submit a letter to the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe's proposal. All in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Any opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries. Just as an aside, I've worked with Jennifer for a number of years. In anticipation of writing this
letter of support, I asked if she would give us just a paragraph that explains what her program is and then we would just sign off as our support on it so that we can expedite getting that letter submitted by her deadline. If I haven't already sent it on to Deanna, I'll get that to her for that piece of it.

Are there any other items that we need to take action on aside from picking our meeting dates that has slipped my mind that we need to do?

(No comments)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right. Hearing none. The next item on our agenda is to confirm the fall 2019 RAC meeting date. At our last meeting we chose to meet during October 8th, 9th and 10th in Petersburg. We either need to submit a motion to confirm this or I need to check and see if those dates and place are still going to work for the Council.

Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Yes. I'm looking at your fall date of October 8th through the 10th and that is my subsistence moose hunting on that particular date. Usually the hunting only lasts like four days. I've been providing a moose every year for at least four or five members in the family. With that in mind, that would be the only thing. I've got no problem with the February date. That I just wanted to bring to your attention.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Bemis. Just to clarify, we'll actually set our winter meeting that includes the February timeframes after we confirm our fall meeting. They are separate meetings.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Yeah, we've got two members from Yakutat that might be affected by that. Larry, when is the opening date of the moose hunt? Would it be better to try and move it forward or back from that date?

MR. BEMIS: Mr. Chair. The new opener starts September on the west side of the Dangerous on
the 16th. The west side opens subsistence October 8th through probably the 12th. At the same time commercial fishing is still going on possibly to the 15th of October. So fishing and hunting pretty much is over with by the 15th.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All right.

Mr. Kitka.

MR. KITKA: Madame Chair. October 29th to the 31st would that be okay for everybody?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: How do the Council members feel about October 29, 30, 31st.

MS. PERRY: There are already two meetings that week, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: I can't hear you.

MS. PERRY: There are already two meetings that week.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Apparently they've been scooped. The current calendar is on the overhead. Just as a reminder only two Regional Councils can meet during a week. So we need to either stick with the week that we have scheduled or if we have to choose a week where there are not currently two RAC meetings.

If we were to change the schedule and push it back, the only week that we would have available would be November 5th.

MR. DOUVILLE: So be it.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Yeager.

MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

I would say that we stick with our 8 through 10 October, but possibly consider a location change to Ketchikan so that we can be there for Saxman. We have not been there and heard from them in a long time. We have been to Petersburg a little more recently. So just asking for consideration there.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Yeager. To make this decision we're going to need a motion. Is everybody okay with the week of November 5 in Ketchikan potentially?

I would like to note that if we're thinking about changing the location that the one rationale or one reason for potentially doing that is that the Alaska real IDs are going to be coming online and it would be good to meet in a community that has a DMV where Council members would be able to take care of that business if they're coming in from villages and I think Ketchikan would fit that bill possibly more than Petersburg would. So that might work.

What about timing? What are you guys thinking?

MR. SCHROEDER: Do we have anyone who can't do November 5 to 7?

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Are there any Council members who object to moving the meeting to the week of November 5th? Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Mr. Yeager kind of suggested keeping it back in October. Did he have some conflict with November?

MR. YEAGER: No, sir. Just trying to keep the ball rolling.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Moving it into the first week of November kind of starts putting it into deer hunting season in Southeast, but we do have a much longer season. So I guess I could live with that.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Is that a motion? Actually if somebody can state the motion clearly rather than just discussion that would be helpful.

Thank you.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I think we're ready for a motion. I move that we hold our fall meeting in the week of November 5th in Ketchikan.

MR. HOWARD: Second.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you. It's been moved and seconded that we have the fall 2019 Regional Advisory Council meeting during the week of November 5th, 6th, 7th in Ketchikan. Is there any discussion.

(No comments)

MR. YEAGER: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called. All in favor of the motion please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Any opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carries.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you. I was also advised by OSM Staff that we should also announce at this time while we're scheduling meetings, it does not require a vote, but it will be my intention as the Chair of the Council that we will call a special meeting that will take place sometime this summer, possibly in August, when we get notification from the Roadless Planning Team that the EIS is out and available for comment.

I will schedule that meeting. It will be a teleconference meeting for the Council and there will also be opportunity for other members of the public to call in on that conference line and testify if they wish. That's my intention just to notify everybody that that's going to happen.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Hernandez. The next item is that we need to select our winter 2020 Regional Advisory Council meeting. The most current information is reflected on the overhead.

MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair.
ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Madame Chair.

May I recommend somewhere around the 15th of March in Juneau. My reasoning is it's around Gold Medal and everyone in Southeast is there. So if they have a concern they can -- you basically have representation from every community in Southeast there at the time to come and speak to the board if they see fit.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It looks like unfortunately that week is outside of the meeting window which closes on March 13th.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. I would propose that maybe we consider the last week in February for a timeframe. I don't have a suggestion for a place, but possibly Petersburg for that meeting unless there's some other reason people want to be in Juneau.

I'll leave that open for discussion.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Does anybody have any conflicts with the last week of February or conflicts with hosting that meeting possibly in Petersburg? I'll remind the Council that we'll have another meeting between now and then and if we need to adjust that we would have that opportunity to do so.

Mr. Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Then I'll move that we hold our next winter meeting the week of February 25th in Petersburg.

MR. DOUVILLE: Second.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: It's been moved and seconded that we have our winter Regional Advisory Council meeting the week of February 24th -- 25th?

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, 24th.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The week of
February 24th in Petersburg.

Any other discussion.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Madame Chair. Under discussion I know in the past we've talked about having one meeting on the north end and one meeting on the south end and that gives opportunity for everyone. Maybe we could leave the location open for future determination. That's just a suggestion.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Howard. I think we can vote now as the motion is and then if we come up with the best location that we want to change it at our next meeting we have the opportunity to do so. That might be the cleanest way to complete this at this time.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Question.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: The question has been called. All in favor of having the winter 2020 Regional Advisory Council meeting the week of February 24th in Petersburg please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: All opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

ACTING CHAIR NEEDHAM: Motion carried. All right. It has been a very long day.

At this point in time I'd like to turn the Chair back over to Mr. Hernandez to close out our meeting.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cathy. That was very helpful to have you run the meeting today. It really gave me a break, so I appreciate that. By golly, even though we went a little past 5:00 we still did a heck of a good job because that was a very difficult agenda to get through.
I will give the Council any opportunity if they care to make any closing remarks. After that I'll accept a motion for adjournment. Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick reminder of the discussion that you and I had about sending a letter of condolence to Jackie Martin concerning Harold Martin and his passing and how he has had an impact on the way I look at things. He's also a clan brother. We've had a lot of conversations, so that's why when I brought up his name earlier it was somewhat difficult. Just a reminder to maybe have a letter sent from you. It doesn't need a motion or anything, but sent from you from the Council to Jackie Martin with condolences from the Council.

Also on the record I'd like it known that the gentleman who had his rifle taken from him, the elder, this is still going to court yet, so they're going to take it to court. But I'd like this Council -- that you're aware that he did shoot the deer in the neck because you heard the reason that the State decided not to allow shooting from the boat was wanton waste. I'd like this to be a future agenda item for conversation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Howard. I'd be glad to sign a letter on behalf of the Council to Mrs. Martin there and condolences. We'll see that that gets done.

Thank you.

Anybody else.

Mr. Douville.

MR. DOUVILLE: I'd like to thank the people of Wrangell for having us. Mr. Yeager and his wife were excellent hosts. Very good.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Yes, Mr. Bemis.

MR. BEMIS: Mr. Chair. I want to thank the committee and everybody and especially the nominee
who put my name up and I'm very honored to be here. I've learned a lot. I can say that I can go home and be a part of the community, helping them as well as staying informed with your issues and other parts of the community. What I see is we're all dealing with similar problems with the changes of the use of the land and the fish product and the game.

As time goes on, if we see a trend it's heading in, that it's very important that we all work together and stay on top of everything along with all the different departments we work with.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: I'd just like to offer my thanks to Wrangell for hosting this meeting and offering us this beautiful building. To the Johnson-O'Malley kids who provided a really good lunch on Tuesday. To John and Brenda for hosting us at a really fine party. To the folks over at the Stikine Inn who kind of made special effort to also provide us with a meal.

It's all much appreciated.

The Council did some really good work this meeting. A lot of difficult issues.

I think we can all be proud of that.

Mr. Howard.

MR. HOWARD: Mr. Chair. This is for the Staff. Thank you to Deanna for all your hard work and the Staff over there against the wall for putting up with us this week and all your hard work. It hasn't gone unnoticed.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Anybody else.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Do we have a motion.

MR. DOUVILLE: Move to adjourn.
MR. YEAGER: Second.

CHAIRMAN HERNANDEZ: Thank you. A motion to adjourn and a second. I think that's all that's required.

The meeting is adjourned.

Thank you all very much.

(Off record)

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )
) ss.
STATE OF ALASKA )

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered through contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHEAST FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME III taken electronically on the 21st day of March in Wrangell, Alaska;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 31st day of March 2019.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22